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**MANAGEMENT OF STRESS  
IN  
ARMY OPERATIONS**

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The research was conducted under Contract DAHC19-77-C-0054, as part of Army project 2Q163743A774, Man-Machine Interface in Integrated Battle Control Systems, fiscal year 1979 work program. The research was sponsored by the Soldier Support Center at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, and supported by the Walter Reed Army Institute for Research, Bethesda, Maryland.

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# MANAGEMENT OF STRESS IN ARMY OPERATIONS

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**April 1981**

## FOREWORD

The two most important ingredients of combat stress are physical fatigue and mental stress. Combat stress is a result of exposure to battle conditions, just as injury and physical disease are results of battle conditions. In past wars, it was revealed that there was one combat stress casualty for every four wounded in action--one for every three wounded during lengthy periods of intense combat. In a war characterized by continuous operations a high intensity integrated battlefield, the relationship of stress casualties to wounded in action is expected to be at least one to three and conceivably even greater. However, combat stress is not solely a medical problem. It is also a command problem--both in terms of numbers lost from duty and reduced performance of duty. This report integrates and presents the latest research information with respect to the recognition, control, and management of stress in combat. It is designed principally for use by military personnel at Company level and below.

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*Joseph Zeidner*  
JOSEPH ZEIDNER  
Technical Director

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**RULES OF THUMB  
FOR THE  
MANAGEMENT OF STRESS IN ARMY OPERATIONS**

- ◆ **Assure that every effort is made to provide for the welfare of the troops.**
- ◆ **Develop in each soldier confidence in self, equipment, unit, training, and leadership.**
- ◆ **Demonstrate leadership that is competent, decisive, assertive, and fair.**
- ◆ **Provide sleep/rest, especially during continuous operations, whenever possible. In particular, insure sleep for decision making personnel.**
- ◆ **Apply the principles of immediacy, proximity, and expectancy when dealing with soldiers under stress.**
- ◆ **Keep mild stress casualties on duty.**
- ◆ **Rest minor stress casualties and return recuperated stress casualties to duty.**
- ◆ **Use techniques for reducing stress before, during, and after combat.**
- ◆ **Keep on top of background sources of stress (prior to combat): family concerns/separation, economic problems, personal problems.**
- ◆ **Point out that the enemy also faces stressful conditions.**
- ◆ **Provide a flow of information upward, downward, and laterally to minimize stress due to uncertainty or lack of information.**
- ◆ **Set realistic goals for progressive development of individual, team, and unit competence. Systematically test the achievement of these goals.**
- ◆ **Make certain that each soldier understands his/her role and his/her contribution to the success of the unit and of the mission.**
- ◆ **Present realistic and detailed expectations about present and future combat conditions.**

- ◆ Praise improvement and coach units toward achieving higher competence.
- ◆ Single out individuals and teams for recognition of competence and develop a spirit of accomplishment.



## **HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF STRESS IN ARMY OPERATIONS**

- ◆ Available human resources for achieving mission objectives are reduced as a result of stress.
- ◆ Duration and intensity of battle increases stress.
- ◆ Be aware of potential stressors: fatigue, mental stress, light level, day/night rhythms.
- ◆ Individuals and units react differently to the same sources of stress.
- ◆ Fear is a normal part of combat experience.
- ◆ Low morale and disciplinary problems often reflect stress.
- ◆ Learn the signs of stress in yourself and in others.
- ◆ Learn what makes a unit vulnerable to stress.
- ◆ Look for signs of stress and for a decreased ability to tolerate stress.
- ◆ Practice and master stress coping techniques and help soldiers to cope.
- ◆ Preparing for stress and coping with it is every soldier's responsibility.
- ◆ Promote knowledge and respect for equipment and its operation under combat conditions.
- ◆ Make units as stress-proof as possible in preparation for combat.
- ◆ Practice stress control through cross training, task allocation, task matching, task paralleling, and task sharing.
- ◆ Build and strengthen defenses against stress: strong and competent leadership, unit cohesion and high esprit, and unit self-confidence.
- ◆ Apply the rules of first aid for stress casualties.
- ◆ Face combat stress; it is unhealthy to deny the stresses of combat.

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## CHAPTER I

### STRESS AS A MILITARY PROBLEM

#### Stress

Stress is a reaction of the mind and the body to extreme demands. The demands may be physical (e.g., cold, injury, disease) or mental (e.g., fear, conflict, pressure). The demand starts within the soldier, as he interprets some external event or personal need. For example, the appearance of an aircraft is not stressful. Stress begins when shape, direction of travel, characteristic noise, attitude, and silhouette provide the tip-off about the intent of the approaching aircraft. Another example is that of continuous noise, which in itself is not very stressful. But, when noise is loud or irregular, it becomes a real source of stress. Whatever the source of stress, the process of coping with stress drains the reserves of the soldier.

#### Understanding Stress

The effects of stress on the soldier and on his combat performance are matters of far reaching significance for effective operations. In ordinary life, sources of stress can sometimes be avoided. In combat, certain sources of stress can sometimes be avoided. In combat, other sources of stress are unavoidable. Therefore, stress, its effects, and its management are a concern for military leadership at every level. Coping with stress in oneself, or guiding others in coping with it, requires an understanding of stress. Effective use of the techniques for countering stress, which are presented in Chapters VI and VII of this Manual, demands an understanding of stress and how it affects individuals and units.

#### Integrated Battlefield

The battlefield of the future will most likely be characterized by:

- ◆ ill defined/fluid combat areas
- ◆ employment of sophisticated/complex equipment
- ◆ high intensity
- ◆ high dispersion
- ◆ high mobility
- ◆ high destruction

- ◆ continuous combat
- ◆ increased emphasis on night fighting

In human terms this means:

- ◆ high lethality
- ◆ high disability
- ◆ high stress
- ◆ casualties not restricted to the front line
- ◆ severe sleep deprivation
- ◆ operating in low light levels
- ◆ operating during normal sleeping hours

#### Continuous Operations

The circumstances, time, or place of future international conflicts cannot be known. However, a demanding mission has been identified (FM 100-5):

Battle in Central Europe against forces of the Warsaw Pact is the most demanding mission the U.S. Army could be assigned.

If such a conflict were to occur, it would most likely take the form of continuous ground combat operations. By their nature, continuous operations provoke severe combat stress. Reinforcements and logistics will be difficult to maintain and force maintenance will be a prime issue. The effects of major sources of stress on fighting capability are reviewed against this background.

#### CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS

Continuous land combat is an advanced concept of modern warfare that is made possible by the almost complete mechanization of land combat forces and by the technology that enables effective movement and combat at night, in poor weather, and under low visibility conditions. Armies now have the potential to fight without let-up despite those reasons that have traditionally forced a pause--darkness, fatigue, resupply, reconstitution, and regrouping.

The Soviets have recognized continuous combat as a principle of combat doctrine and have been working toward that capability since 1954. Their concept is based on echeloning forces so that the intensity of the combat offensive can be maintained continuously and without let up at the points of contact.

Soviet doctrine calls for a rapid advance, deep penetration, relentless attack, and the bypassing of strongly defended points. Such a battlefield would have no clearly defined forward line of own troops (FLOT), and could have a depth of as much as 100 kilometers. On such a battlefield, the normal method of combat would be meeting engagements between individual battalion sized task forces. Communication and coordination among these units would be severely curtailed. The resulting uncertainty of the overall status of the battlefield constitutes a stress of the highest order. From a human dimension point of view, soldiers will need to cope with the sources of stress associated with any battle, compounded by the sources of stress resulting from continuous operations.

#### Human Resources

From the Army's point of view, stress is a problem because it reduces available human resources. Human resources, along with equipment, training, and doctrine, make up the total combat potential and are, therefore, an essential element for success in combat.

The commander's available human resources (including combat and support troops) may be reduced in several ways. These include:

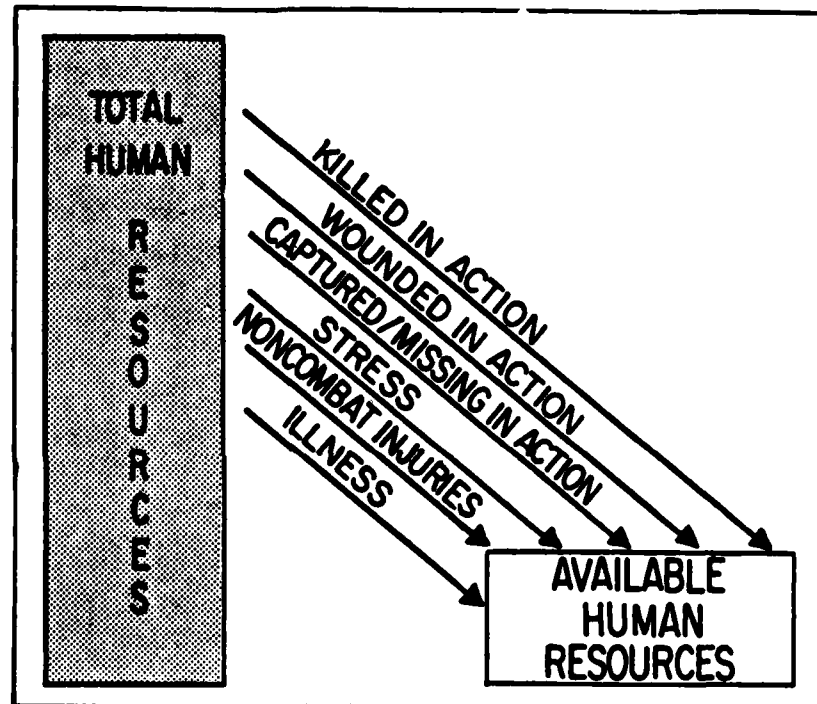
- ◆ Killed in action (KIA)
- ◆ Wounded in action (WIA)
- ◆ Captured/Missing in action (MIA)
- ◆ Stress
- ◆ Noncombat injuries
- ◆ Illness

The effect of shrinkage of the total available human resources (in terms of the pool of personnel and performance capability) in combat is depicted in the figure on page 4. High stress on combat, combat support, and combat service support troops shrinks available human resources.

The result of high stress on personnel is:

- ◆ reduced performance capability
- ◆ stress casualties

*High stress decreases combat capability*



In combat available human resources shrink.

#### Sources of Stress

Major sources of stress which have been identified in continuous operations are:

- ▼ Fatigue. Fighting without rest and sleep produces fatigue. In practice, tired muscles can be made to work (although less well), for a short period of time, no matter how tired one becomes. The brain, on the other hand, cannot function as well without sleep. Sleep is a must for every fighting soldier.



#### **Stress Problems on the Integrated Battlefield**

- ▼ **Mental Stress.** Mental stress results from the need to be alert, evaluate situations, and make decisions in too little time. Fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and conflict may cause mental stress.
- ▼ **Light Level.** The amount of light available for seeing landmarks, targets, and maps, is not adequate at night. Twilight, too, presents difficulties. Low light levels are a source of stress when light is needed for performance.
- ▼ **Day/Night Rhythms.** Most soldiers are accustomed to being asleep during certain hours. Performance during normal sleeping hours suffers from the disruption of the normal schedule. The hours between 0200 and 0600 are particularly important.

The integrated battlefield will present demands on the soldier, in addition to those of intense combat. Nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) weapons may be used. If employed, protective gear must be worn. The necessity for implementing standard precautionary procedures will further reduce the time available for rest and sleep and increase the probability of exhaustion and fatigue among personnel.

**NBC threat will create stress**

As long as the possibility of NBC warfare cannot be discounted, it must be considered by all commanders and soldiers. The threat of NBC employment can be a major source of stress, especially if fear of the unknown is allowed to develop. Stress will be aggravated if unsupported rumors are permitted to circulate. Commanders must insure that accurate information is passed through the entire chain of command, so that it reaches every soldier.



### **Isolation and Fatigue**

Not only will military units tend to operate in isolation from each other, but even individual soldiers may become isolated from each other. In the Revolutionary War, for example, foot-soldiers stood shoulder-to-shoulder as they fired their muzzle loaded weapons. By contrast, modern weapons have a far greater range, lethality, and rate of fire. The soldier of today is able to control a far greater area of the integrated battlefield than the soldier of former days. Instead of standing shoulder-to-shoulder, present-day soldiers, while tactically deployed, may be widely separated as compared to their forefathers. The nearness of other humans will be lacking and the lack of personal interactive support may be a significant source of stress in future combat.

*Isolation is a source of stress*

Fatigue from loss of sleep reduces performance effectiveness. Tasks of a thinking or decision making nature are most affected. The soldier's alertness becomes sharply reduced. Under these circumstances, the likelihood of mistakes increases and some mistakes can lead to serious consequences.

### **Effectiveness and Decreased Performance**

Execution of any task depends on certain basic abilities. For example, to aim and fire at a target, the soldier usually must be able to see it. The less clearly he is able to see the target, the less likely he is to hit it. Adverse conditions (such as darkness or low light levels) reduce abilities required for effective performance of many combat tasks and degrade combat performance.

### **Sleep Loss**

For as many as five days, troops in continuous operations will be deprived of extended, regular sleep and possibly of any sleep. While performing around the clock, their normal day/night rhythms will be disrupted. While the effects of the disrupted day/night rhythms diminish, sleep loss effects increase constantly. Sleep loss of 36 to 48 hours creates severe stress. In some individuals, hallucinations (e. g., seeing or hearing things that do not exist) begin to appear.

The constantly increasing effects of sleep loss unquestionably tax and deplete bodily resources, which have an absolute limit. As more of these resources must be devoted to staying awake, fewer are available for coping with fear, uncertainty, noise, conflict, and a hurried pace. Along with the weakening of the bodily responses, the mental responses can be expected to deteriorate.

The impact of loss of sleep on performance was demonstrated in a field exercise. Those tasks that degraded to approximately 50 percent of the original performance after three sleepless days were: certain types of thinking (such as decision making and planning), short term memory, and decoding messages. The three-day sleep loss had little or no effect on the performance of the following types of tasks: filling magazines by hand, loading rifles, field-stripping weapons, and map plotting. The effects of sleep loss are further summarized in the following figure.

### FIELD EXERCISE RESULTS

Conditions: Three infantry platoons, defensive posture, wet/damp cold weather

#### Amount of Sleep

Zero

- Effective in physical tasks for three days
- All withdraw (stress casualties) by Day 4

1.5 hours per night

- 1/2 stay effective for six days
- 1/2 withdraw (stress casualties) by Day 7

3 hours per night

- 91 percent remain effective over nine days

#### Other Sources of Stress

While combat, especially continuous combat operations, generates stress extremes, combat stress is not the only source of stress to which soldiers are subjected. During war, preparing soldiers for combat and integrating them into units produces a variety of stress sources (for example, thorough training, removal from family, acceptance of discipline).

The division in garrison can present the soldier with conditions that tend to frustrate natural inclinations and desires (for example, privacy, ample leisure time and activities, time to oneself). To serve the nation's common cause, the soldier must put this cause ahead of his own needs. He must participate in rigorous training. His assigned duties and schedules may be distasteful.

Problems of garrison duty are aggravated in overseas locations. There, the soldier may find himself surrounded by an unfamiliar culture with strange customs and manners. Even duty in a friendly foreign country, under such circumstances, may intensify feelings of isolation. When duty is

in occupied enemy territory, this problem is further intensified. Recreation away from the garrison will be severely limited or nonexistent. Moreover, the soldier must be prepared to face hostile action, either of a spontaneous or of a deliberately organized nature. Threats of enemy military action or the reality of such action may be present. Each of these examples contains sources of stress which can adversely affect performance. The commander must assure that a stress reduction program is implemented and supported. Techniques for such a program are presented in Chapters VI and VII.

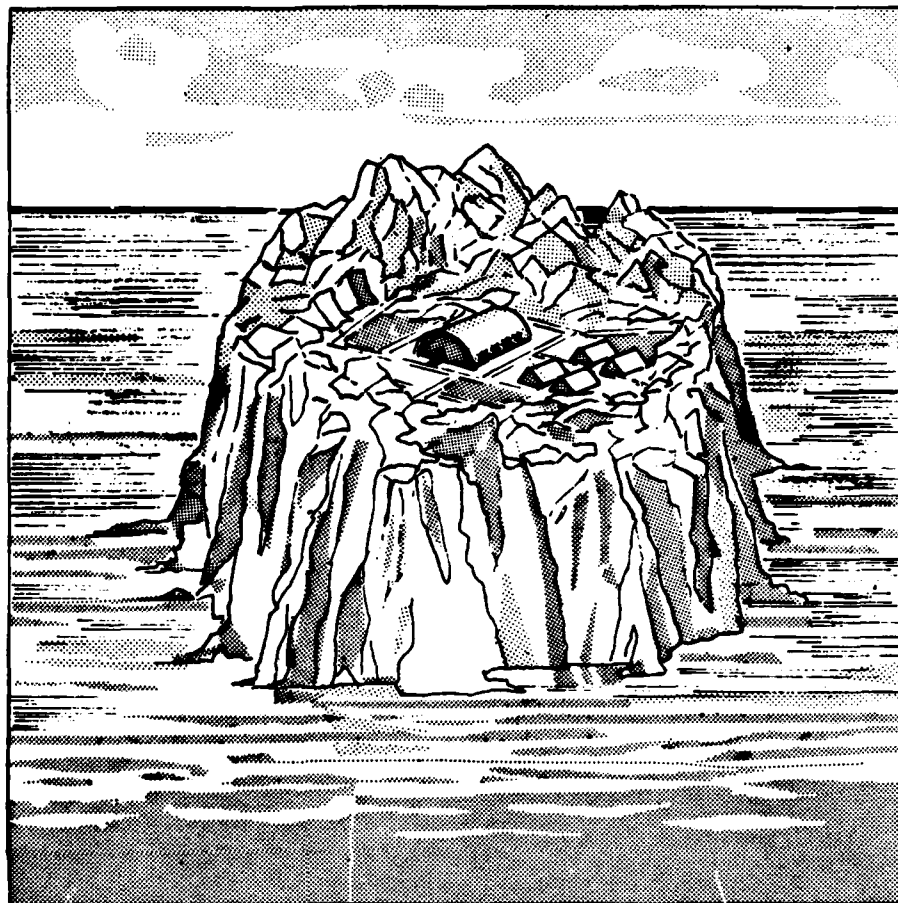
Demanding duty schedules can keep a soldier from meeting many family obligations. Field duty removes the soldier from family, friends, and familiar surroundings. In time of war, military requirements and duty schedules preclude frequent visits home, so that loneliness is a common experience. This can lead to a loyalty conflict. This source of stress may be compounded by normal family conflicts, economic worries, and other related problems. While these sources of stress are not peculiar to military life, they interact or overlap with the military situation.

*Even normal duty can produce stress*

#### **Stress and Geography**

Geography can be a source of stress. The impact of geographic conditions is not uniquely military, but exists as a background of combat and frequently intensifies the stress experienced by a soldier. Among the geographic conditions are: climate, terrain, living conditions, diet, disease, and isolation.

*Geography creates stress*



**Some places are confining...and stressful.**

### **Stress Reactions in Combat**

Stress begins to mount just prior to actual combat. In combat all soldiers are afraid. To be afraid of a threatening situation is normal! A state of tension and anxiety is so prevalent in combat that it must be regarded as a normal reaction. Gallant and heroic deeds have been accomplished by soldiers under stress.

*Fear is a normal reaction in combat*

Combat stress is caused by:

- ◆ extreme physical fatigue
- ◆ extreme, repeated, and continued threat to personal safety

The signs of normal combat stress may seem alarming when they are first experienced. Not all soldiers experience these symptoms to any important degree. Within a group of soldiers, many have some of the signs. A few have many of them, and some have few or none. Normal combat stress signs include:

- ◆ rapid heartbeat and palpitations
- ◆ pounding heart
- ◆ muscular tension ("tightening up")
- ◆ sinking stomach
- ◆ "freezing" (temporary inability to move)
- ◆ breathlessness
- ◆ frequent urination
- ◆ inability to control bladder
- ◆ inability to control bowels
- ◆ perspiration and cold sweat
- ◆ feeling too hot, too cold, or both, alternately
- ◆ shaking and trembling
- ◆ feeling faint or giddy
- ◆ nausea
- ◆ vomiting
- ◆ feeling weak and too tired to move

#### **Degrees of Stress Casualty**

Mild cases of stress are found among those who verbalize fears with obvious signs (e. g. , trembling, tears), display physical exhaustion, or complain of physical symptoms. Severe combat stress is marked by either extremely excitable and aggressive behavior or apathetic and depressed behavior. Other signs of stress are provided in Appendixes A, B, and C.

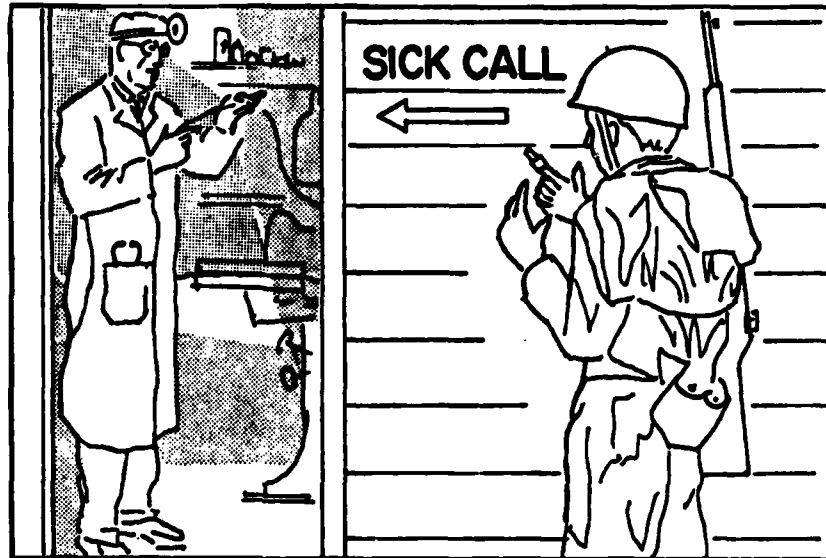
#### **Anticipation of Combat**

Anticipation of a threat is extremely stressful. Waiting to go into combat is itself very stressful. This is a normal reaction.

***Stress in anticipation of combat is normal***

Battalion surgeons and other medical personnel serving combat units routinely observe that on the eve of combat there is an unusually large sick call. These sick calls consist of large numbers of soldiers with minor illnesses and injuries, including such complaints as headaches.

toothaches, indigestion, worry over healed or nearly healed wounds, broken eyeglasses, and broken dentures. Sometimes a type of complaint becomes fashionable.

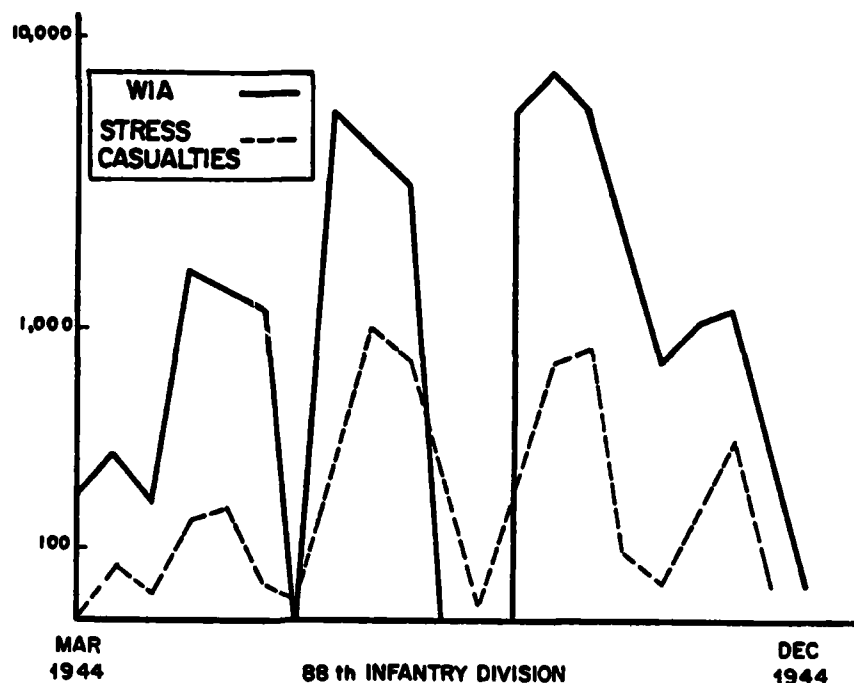


Medical officers refer to these exceptionally large sick calls as the "precombat syndrome." The lesson to be learned is that these soldiers, while actually complaining about their physical illness or disability, are expressing an anticipatory stress reaction about the events to come during combat in the near future. The precombat syndrome is normal and should be expected. Knowledgeable medical personnel, as well as unit leaders, will, of course, watch carefully for the actual inability of individual soldiers to perform effectively.

### Combat Intensity

Experience from WW II and Korea demonstrated a clear and reliable relationship between battle intensity and stress casualties. When battle intensity is expressed in terms of the number of persons Wounded In Action (WIA), the relationship may be graphically illustrated as follows.





#### Combat Duration

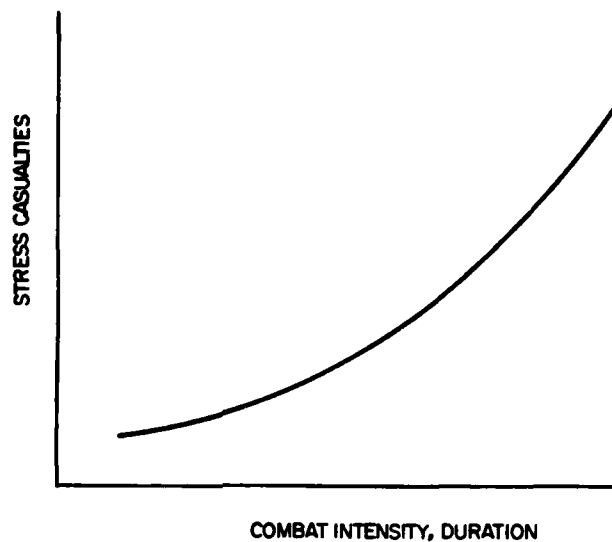
Stress accumulates over time in combat. It builds until the soldier cannot cope effectively. His mental and physical resources for coping with combat stress become almost nonexistent. During the Normandy campaign in WW II combat stress casualties were described;

...the soldier was slow witted; he was slow to comprehend simple orders, directions and techniques, and he failed to perform even life saving measures such as digging in quickly. Memory defects became so extreme that he could not be counted upon to relay a verbal order.

#### Combat Intensity plus Combat Duration

Both combat intensity and duration determine how much stress the soldier may experience. Stress casualties increase when combat intensity increases. Stress casualties also increase the longer troops stay in active combat. The greatest stress results from very intense combat that continues for an extended period.

*Stress is directly related to both combat intensity and duration*



Combat intensity, duration, and stress casualties.

In WW II and Korea, continuous combat amounted to some 2-3 active combat engagements per day. The expectation for future continuous operations is on the order of 10-12 combat engagements per day. This increased frequency of combat engagements can be expected to interact with other sources of stress to produce stress greater than previously experienced in prior wars.

#### Anticipated Stress Casualties

The U.S. Army found in WW II and in Korea that there is a relatively constant ratio of one stress casualty to between four and five WIA (1:4-5). Other armies, also, have found this ratio to hold. However, Vietnam data do not reflect this ratio. Vietnam is not considered typical because tours of duty were short, and combat was not like WW II or Korea.

Vietnam provided data on stress casualties in combat support units, as well as combat units. Whereas combat units showed severe symptoms, which were labelled "combat exhaustion" or "fatigue," some combat service units displayed antisocial and immature behavior, and occasional drug abuse. Support troops, who were exposed to minimal physical danger or hardship, were stressed more by separation from family, boredom, and frustration than by the typical combat stresses. Noncombat related stress casualties were referred to as "disorder of loneliness."

Although combat stress experience does not exist for continuous combat operations on the integrated battlefield, it is believed that stress casualties will be in a ratio with WIA of at least 1:3. This belief is based on the anticipated combat intensity and the relationship of stress casualties to combat intensity and duration.

*For continuous operations the ratio of stress casualties to WIA is expected to be at least 1:3*

With the same combat intensity and duration, expected stress casualty rates differ for different types of combat units (e. g., armor units are expected to be higher than airborne units).

The type of operation is a factor in generating stress casualties. A highly paced and highly mobile combat operation suggests that casualties (at least WIAs) may have to be carried with their units for extended periods, since disengagement for casualty evacuation may not be possible. The presence of casualties, itself, is a source of stress of critical importance for members of a military unit.

#### **Salvaging Human Resources**

Salvaging human resources, especially personnel whose emotional fitness for combat duty is suspect, is a military problem. Mild stress casualties should remain with the unit. This is to the advantage of the soldier himself, and to the Army. Removal of mild stress casualties from their unit only serves to reinforce the stress reaction and to hinder recovery. Given a little time to rest and recuperate, they will again be able to perform normal duties.

*Mild stress casualties  
should remain in their unit*

#### **Individual and Unit Differences**

Reactions to combat stress vary. The severity of reactions can differ considerably from soldier to soldier and from unit to unit.

Two divisions in the Pacific theater, during WW II, had major and chronic problems with stress casualties. One division seemed to function as if it were under a cloud of

failure and incompetence, and there were large numbers of psychiatric casualties. The other division lost almost 10 percent of its total strength as stress casualties. This division had organizational, morale, and leadership problems. In combat, breakdown was contagious. Mass breakdown occurred among small groups such as infantry squads.

Another factor which differentiates the stress reaction patterns of military units is the extent of their combat experience. Green divisions tended to have higher numbers of stress casualties, as in Tunisia at the battles of the Kasserine and Faid passes. There, stress casualties reached levels as high as 35 percent of all casualties.

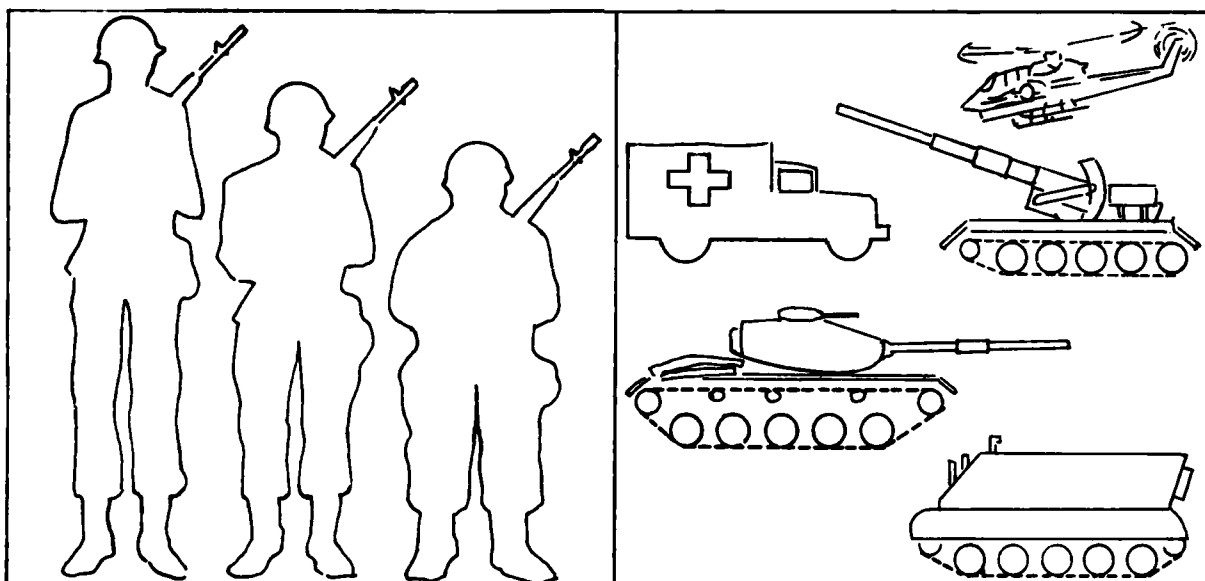
*The reaction to stress  
differs among individuals and units*

#### **Leadership and Unit Identification**

A powerful difference can be seen when the stress casualty rates of elite units in WW II, for example, the Airborne Divisions are contrasted with rates for other divisions. Almost certainly, these differences were due to the quality of leadership and unit identification in these units. In no engagement, for which data are available, were stress casualties in Airborne Divisions of the European Theatre of Operations in excess of six out of every 100 casualties. This rate applies, for example, to the 82nd Airborne Division for the period 6 June to 13 July 1944 in Normandy (38 days). During this period, the 82nd sustained 4196 WIA, indicating an extraordinary ferocity of combat. Over a similar period (36 days), an infantry division in action in Italy sustained 1800 WIA, but the stress casualty rate was twice as high as for the Airborne Divisions (13 out of every 100 casualties).

#### **Motivation**

Units also showed differences in stress casualty rates, as a function of motivation. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, composed primarily of Nisei from Hawaii and relocation centers, had a common incentive to prove itself because of the Japanese background of its troops. The 442nd was also the most decorated unit in the U.S. Army. As a consequence of these factors, the 442nd had almost no stress casualties throughout the Italian campaign.



**There are individual AND unit differences.**

### **Summary**

- ▼ High stress decreases combat capability.
- ▼ NBC threat will create stress.
- ▼ Isolation is a source of stress.
- ▼ Even normal duty can produce stress.
- ▼ Geography can create stress.
- ▼ Fear is a normal reaction in combat.
- ▼ Stress in anticipation of combat is normal.
- ▼ Stress is directly related to both combat intensity and duration.
- ▼ For continuous operations the ratio of stress casualties to WIA is expected to be at least 1:3.
- ▼ Mild stress casualties should remain in their unit.
- ▼ The reaction to stress differs among individuals and units.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE SOLDIER

#### Meaning of Stress

The effects of stress on the soldier are complex because humans are complex. The effects of stress vary with the:

- ♦ strength of each source of stress
- ♦ number of stress sources
- ♦ combination and interaction of the sources of stress
- ♦ vulnerability of the individual personality

In the automobile engine, the response to the demand for high speed is met through rapid piston travel. Rapid piston movement and fast repetition of explosions in the cylinders lead to an excessive heat build-up. The cooling system cannot cope with the heat build-up, which goes beyond its heat dissipation capabilities. One effect leads to another so that stress is produced.

Not only are soldiers more complex than automobiles, but their reactions to the physical and mental sources of stress are far more complicated. In the automobile, the response to stress amounts to wear and tear on the moving parts and to the weakening of the structure. In the human, there is a mental response to stress, as well as a physical response.



## **Stress in Humans**

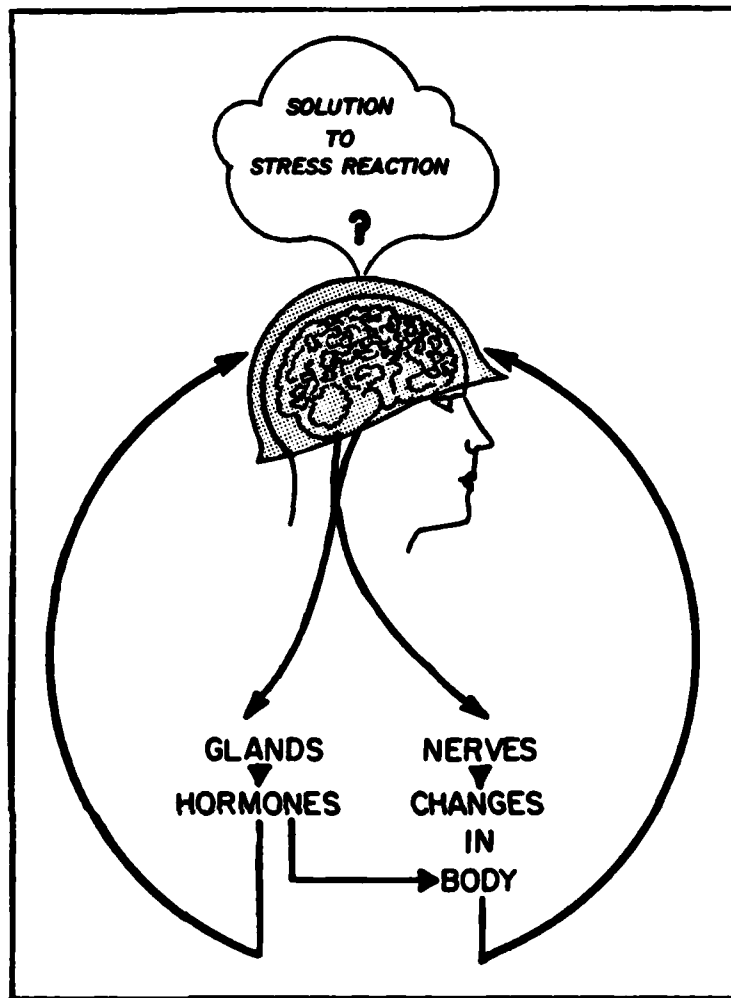
The soldier must move at high speeds at certain times. For example, the infantry soldier may have to cross open terrain under fire. He can, as the automobile cannot, think about what may happen. Thinking ahead may suggest a complicated, conflicting, and threatening picture. If the soldier stays in a covered position, there is a risk from an incoming mortar barrage that is coming closer and closer; if he moves out, he exposes himself to enemy fire. The soldier will normally experience fear in such a situation. His fear may tell him to hide, but reason may tell him to move. He must deal with a conflict choosing between opposing courses of action. In dealing with this conflict, he must consider his best chance of survival and how to support his unit's mission.

*The soldier in combat is  
continuously exposed to choosing  
between opposing courses of action*

## **How Humans Respond to Stress**

For the human, the number and sources of stress are many. Some of the sources of stress for soldiers were described in Chapter I.

When a source of stress appears, it is evaluated by the brain. The evaluation, which is automatic, mobilizes the resources for coping with stress. Some messages go out to certain glands. These glands then produce more of the hormones that will be needed in the coping process. Other messages go out over nerves. This causes the heart to beat faster and to pump more blood. Energy stored in the liver is released. There is deeper and better breathing. Also, the blood supply to the brain is increased. The effects are shown on the following page.



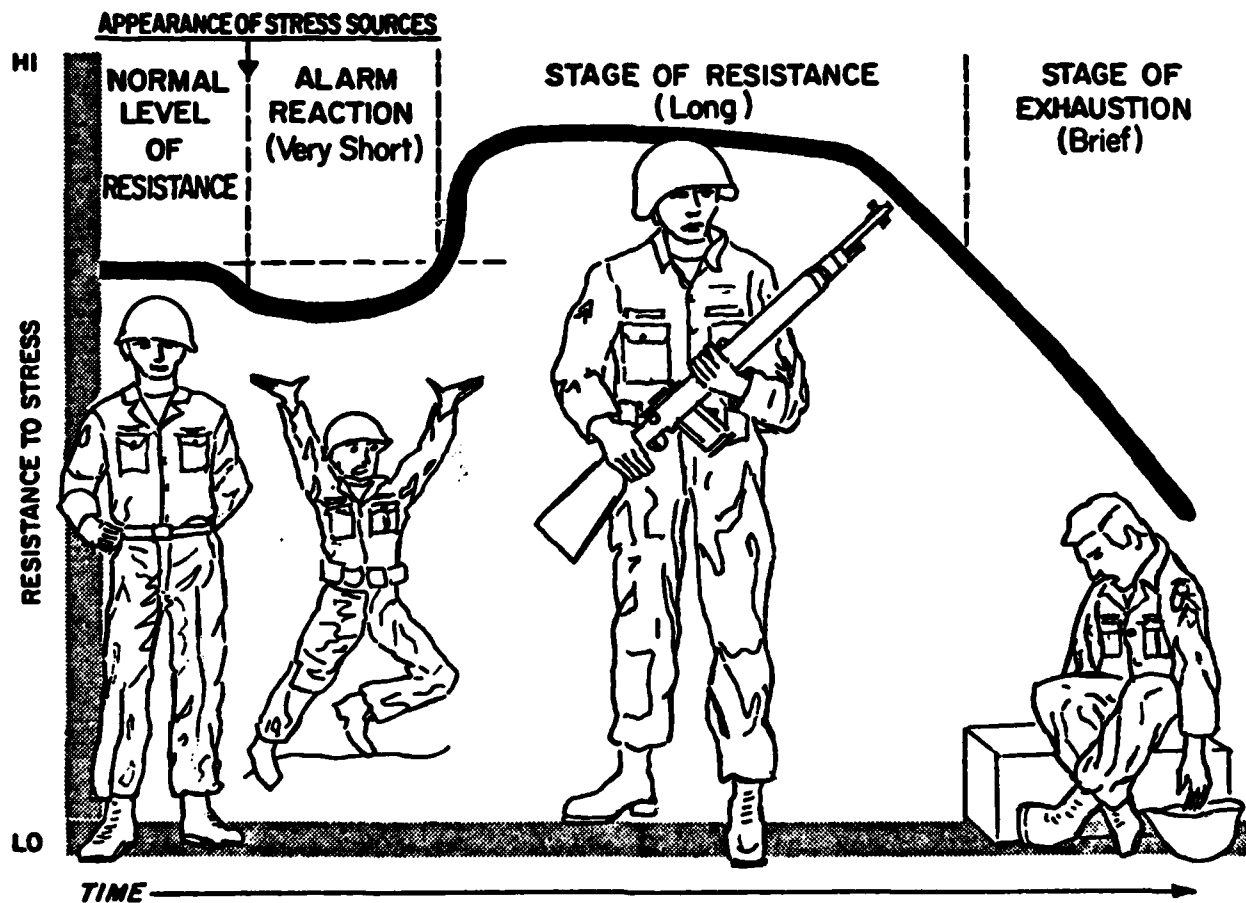
### Stress Response Stages

Regardless of the source of stress, the overall response can be described by a set of stages. During the first stage, called the Alarm Reaction, the normal level of resistance to sources of stress actually drops slightly. The body is "getting ready to get ready." This stage is relatively brief. It is followed by a second stage, called the Stage of Resistance, during which resources are successfully mobilized. As a result, the level of resistance to sources of stress is greatly increased. When stress is very high and continues for a long time, the resources for resistance are expended faster than the body can create them. Eventually, the Stage of Exhaustion is reached.



This means that the available bodily resources have been exhausted. The resistance to stress by stage and time is depicted in the figure below.

*The response to stress follows stages*



#### Action and Stress

Action alone cannot solve all stress problems. Sometimes action is not possible. When the body is ready for action, but the action is not possible, frustration may follow. This frustration may become a stress source.

Coping with stress involves controlling the internal reactions to stress sources. If the source of stress cannot be removed, personnel under stress should learn to cope. The internal unrest (caused by the source of stress) must be controlled so that the mental processes needed to solve the problem causing stress can be utilized.

***Successful coping reduces stress***

**Extreme and  
Prolonged  
Stress**

When stress becomes so extreme that the individual cannot do anything besides trying to cope with it, the efforts to cope also become extreme. Examples of behavior that appear when the effort to cope is no longer successful are the soldier who, under heavy fire, suddenly "thinks" that he is safe in his home; or, in the middle of an artillery barrage, he curls up into a blind, unhearing, unfeeling, inactive ball. Before a fire fight, a soldier may relieve the need for action by fighting with those around him. Alternatively, he may become very quiet, sulky, and withdraw into himself. Most individuals do cope, at least moderately well with stresses. They succeed in keeping stress from overwhelming them. However, anyone may be overcome by stress, if that stress is too severe and lasts too long.

***Extreme stress may produce irrational behavior***

Continuing severe stress also affects the body. It can lead to physical problems, illness, and disease. These problems are the result of endless mobilization by the body for emergency.

Individual differences are a fact of life. The causes of these differences are many and complex. Adjusting for these differences is also a complex and difficult matter.

**Differences  
Among  
Individuals**

Soldiers do not all have the same physical or mental characteristics. Some are tall, others are short; some have strong muscles, others are physically weaker; some have high intelligence, others are less bright; some freeze under fire, while others act energetically and eliminate the source of fire; and some are more sensitive to stress than others.

However, given enough stress for an extended period of time, any soldier could become unable to cope; for some, this happens sooner than for others. It should be remembered that a soldier's ability to cope is relative to the amount and duration of stress and his previous experience.

Combat experience affects the soldier's ability to cope. Faced with the same artillery barrage, the inexperienced replacement will have more difficulty coping than the combat veteran. The soldier who has experienced artillery fire before, at the very least, knows that it is not the end. He has survived the previous experience.

*The soldier can learn to cope with stress*

*Experience lessens stress*

It is important for leaders to be aware of the effects that various sources of stress have on soldiers and the techniques that can be employed to counter these effects. These subjects are thoroughly discussed in subsequent chapters. Equally important, leaders should consider the sources of stress in planning military operations.

#### Summary

- ▼ The soldier in combat is continuously exposed to choosing between opposing courses of action.
- ▼ The response to stress follows stages.
- ▼ Successful coping reduces stress.
- ▼ Extreme stress may produce irrational behavior in certain individuals.
- ▼ The soldier can learn to cope with stress.
- ▼ Experience lessens stress.

## CHAPTER III

### SOURCES AND DEGREES OF STRESS IN MILITARY LIFE

#### Section 1. Stress in Military Life

##### **Background Sources of Stress**

During peacetime, combat is not a source of stress, either in CONUS or overseas. However, stress is not absent during these periods. Normal background sources of stress exist. The background sources of stress can be classified as personal (within the soldier) and unit (outside the soldier). Personal sources of stress include, but are not limited to: self-conflicts, family conflicts, economic worries, blocks to promotions, and difficult duty schedules. Unit sources of stress occur when the soldier is troubled by situations within his unit and adverse circumstances under which his unit must continue to function. These will reduce the resources available for coping with combat stress and degrade combat effectiveness.

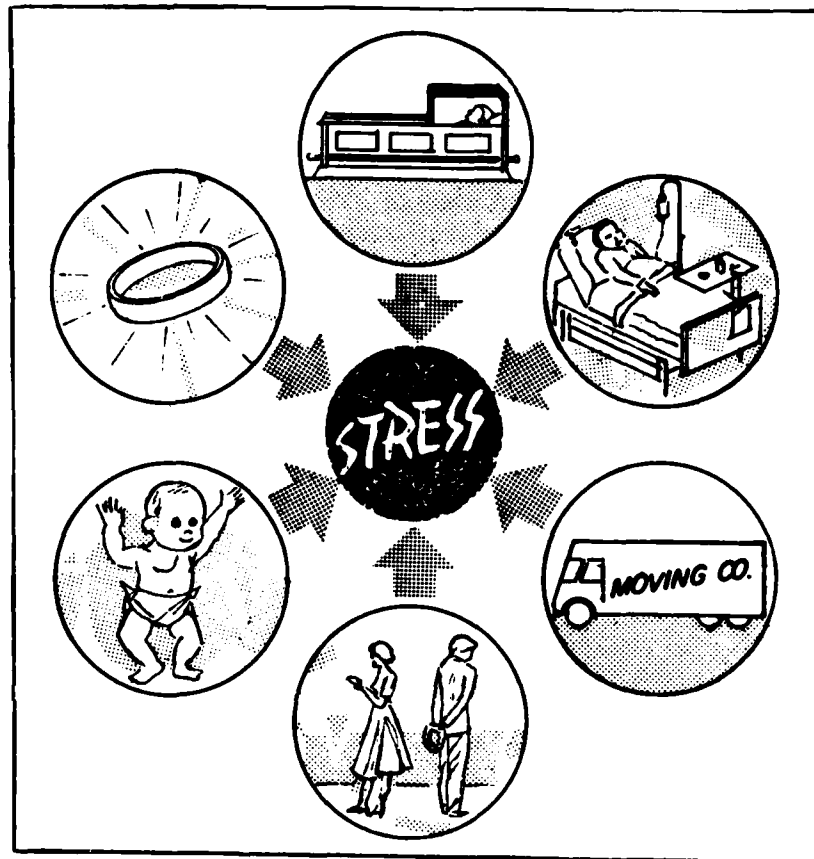
**Background stress reduces combat effectiveness**

Some prior sources of stress fade away. For example, prior to combat, soldiers may have doubts about their own "toughness" (ability not to freeze under fire), which may be resolved during the first combat experience. Concern about the possible use of NBC weapons, being killed, wounded, or incapacitated are examples of other kinds of background sources of stress.

Many general sources of stress come from major life-events. Every life-event, positive and negative, has the potential of being a source of stress. Some major events are:

- ◆ death of close relative
- ◆ marriage
- ◆ children
- ◆ separation or divorce
- ◆ reassignment
- ◆ illness or injury (self or family)

The figure below shows various personal life-event sources of stress. Soldiers, as well as civilians, are subject to these universal sources of stress.



#### Duty Assignments

During peacetime, Army life has many of the same stresses as those in any large industrial organization. In both, there are worries about promotion, under-utilization of skills, hard work loads, and disagreements with superiors. However, Army life is often tougher. Army duty is around the clock. Army training is physically and mentally demanding.

Stress from training for combat is specific to the Army in peacetime service. Combat capability, especially for continuous operations on the integrated battlefield environment, is related to the ability to cope with exhaustion while

performing effectively. Combat training should include coping with the stress sources of disrupted day/night rhythms, poor visibility, heat, and cold.

#### **Morale and Disciplinary Problems**

Morale and disciplinary problems show themselves in behavior that is at odds with Army objectives and regulations. Often such behavior is a response to stress. The situation is made worse if there is a lack of unit cohesion and esprit. In combat, this is very serious. For example, records show that certain WW II units, in which cohesion and esprit were lacking, had far more physical and stress casualties than other units and, as a result, they performed poorly in combat.

*Morale and disciplinary problems reflect stress*

Unacceptable forms of coping with stress, such as malinger, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, vandalism, and criminal activities can occur when there is inactivity, monotony, isolation, and a hostile climate. All of these conditions existed in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands during WW II. The physical environment in these places acted like a prison. It confined troops to their barracks or immediate area. Frustration, boredom, and inactivity led to acts of vandalism, such as punching holes in barrack's wall-board lining with bare fists. There were cases of insubordination and fighting. Gambling, for some, became an obsession. Alcohol was very difficult to obtain, but was prepared in secret and when available, was consumed to excess.

In combat, or in conditions similar to those in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands in WW II, misconduct of a mild to very serious nature can occur unless a vigorous program to counteract stress is instituted.



Misconduct may be stress getting out of control.

#### **Frustration and Pressure**

The deviant behavior in Alaska and the Aleutians was probably mostly due to frustration. When strong needs (relief from boredom) are not satisfied, or goals (promotion) are blocked, or there is a long delay in prospect, frustration results. Relieving frustration in a soldier or a unit calls for an assessment of the reasons behind the outward signs. Sources of frustration are not always obvious, and there are many sources even in ordinary life.

Stress can be internally caused, often a result of continued pressure ("I must get that promotion . . ."), or externally caused ("Get me that information by 0900 . . .") by superiors, peers, and rapidly changing conditions. When the stress level gets too high and lasts too long, it may exceed the soldier's tolerance for coping. He may "blow up" or collapse. To recognize stress look for the warning signs (Appendixes A, B, and C). To hold stress below the tolerance limits, use the coping techniques (Appendixes D and E).

#### **Section 2. The Stress of Combat**

#### **Tactical Uses of Stress**

The greatest stress occurs on the battlefield. The stress of combat can be used tactically as the quotation on the following page makes clear:

If the enemy is to be coerced you must put him in a situation that is even more unpleasant than the sacrifice you call on him to make. The hardships of the situation must not, of course, be merely transient--at least not in appearance. Otherwise, the enemy would not give in but would wait for things to improve. Any change that might be brought about by continuing hostilities must then, at least in theory, be of a kind that will bring the enemy still greater disadvantages. . . . .

(von Clausewitz)

Making combat as tough as possible for the opposing force is a primary goal in war. The principal can be used against the enemy and it can be used by the enemy. Each combat source of stress can be used by both sides for tactical advantage. Remember, the opposing force is also under stress. Imposing additional stress on the enemy can be used for tactical advantage.

*The opposing force is also under stress!  
Make it as tough for the enemy as possible.*

#### **Uncertainty as a Source of Stress**

One tactical principle is denial of information to the enemy, while at the same time increasing intelligence information about the enemy. This principle reflects the fact that uncertainty is a source of stress. Information and uncertainty are opposites; the more information, the less uncertainty, and vice versa. Knowing enemy locations, strength, weapons, and intention amounts to having much significant information; not knowing this, amounts to much uncertainty. Denial of information to the opposing force makes surprise possible. Lack of information about future events is a severe source of stress. If what to expect is not known, preparation for an appropriate response is impaired.

*Accurate information reduces stress*

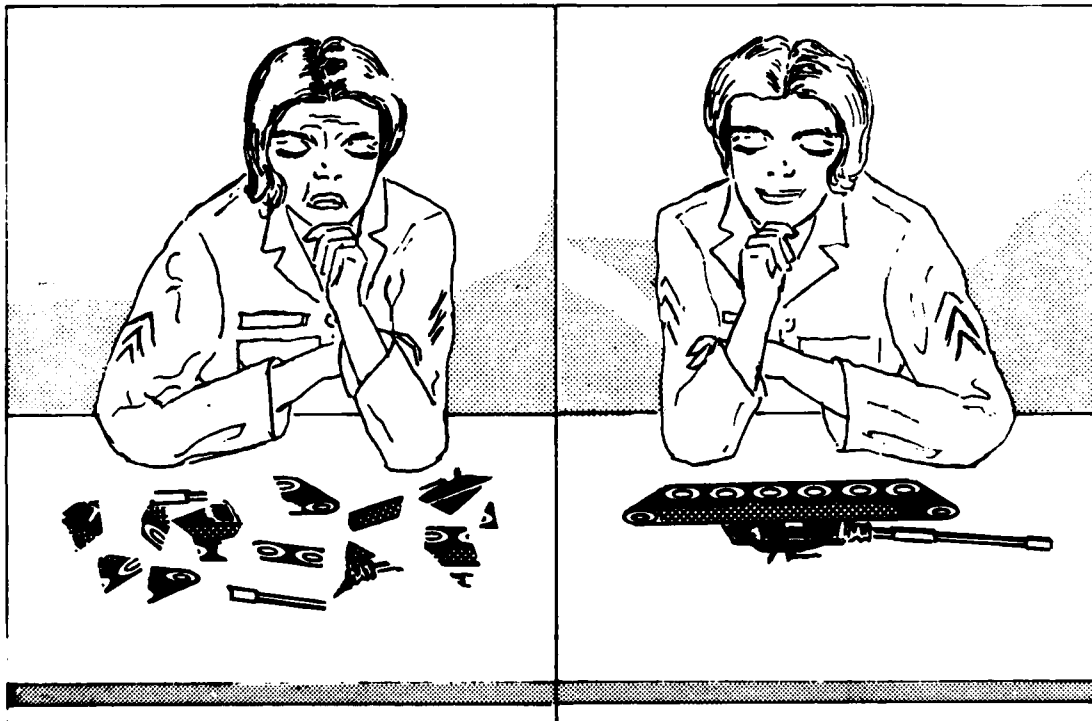
#### **Decision Making Confidence**

Information is necessary for arriving at decisions in which there is confidence. If tactical information is available about the enemy, a decision can be reached in which there



is widespread confidence. If little or no information is available about the enemy, confidence in any tactical decision will be low. Low confidence in a decision based on insufficient information is a definite source of stress.

*Confidence in decisions reduces stress*



**Much uncertainty  
and little information.**

**Much information  
and little uncertainty.**

The stress of uncertainty is illustrated as follows:

. . . a superior may take . . . comfort and support from a comprehensive understanding of the military situation. Yet, he may fail to recognize the importance of 'passing on down' those security-free aspects of such information which could be of emotional aid to those under him. Lack of knowledge supports many fears or erroneous beliefs.

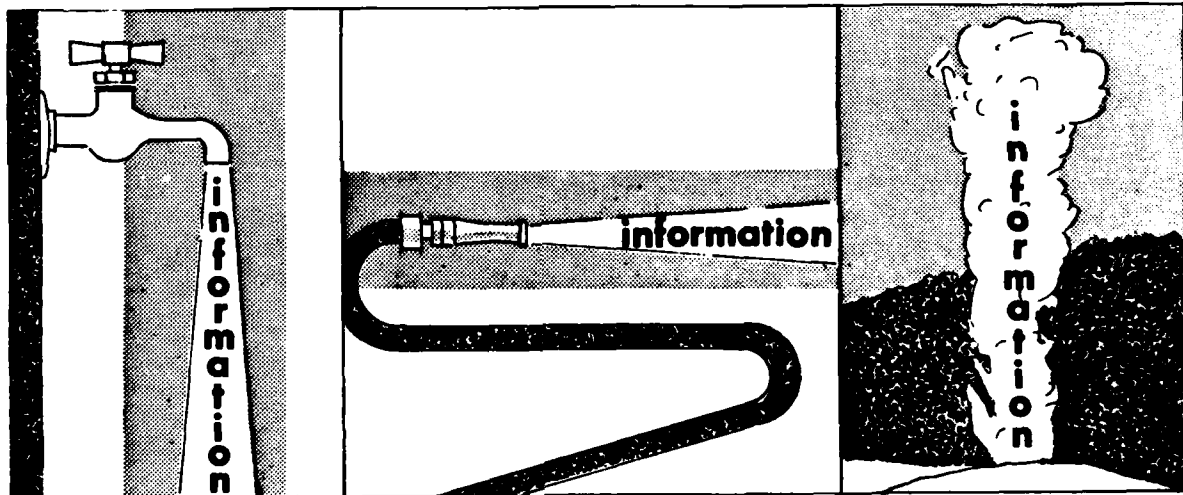
This statement was taken from a summary of interviews with 650 infantrymen during the Korean conflict. Similarly, in these interviews, the loss of wire or radio communications was identified as a serious problem, especially when they occurred frequently.

*Leaders reduce stress  
by keeping soldiers informed*

#### Information Flow

Information, which reduces the stress of uncertainty, should flow in three different directions:

- ◆ down the chain of command
- ◆ within and between units
- ◆ up the chain of command



Information must flow down, across, and up.

#### Information and Control

Information and uncertainty are related to the idea of control. Studies show that a feeling of being in control helps one to tolerate stress. For example, in a noisy environment, people perform better as long as they believe they have the power to turn off the noise. Information about his situation helps the soldier to feel he has some control.

#### Leadership Failure

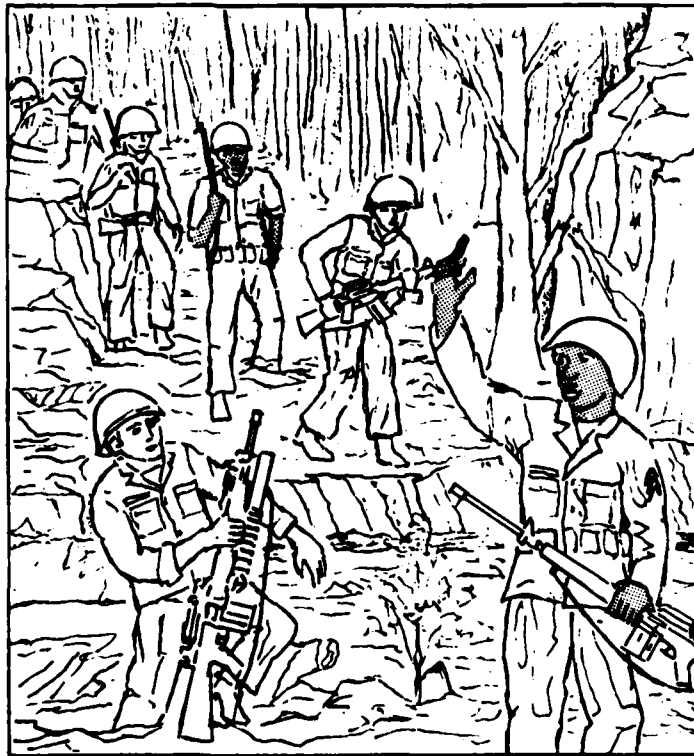
The effects of poor leadership are illustrated by the interviews with combat soldiers in Korea:

There were also clear-cut cases where a leader's obvious fear, inability to control himself, poor decisions, or even mere absence were responsible for the loss of tactical advantages, men, and equipment.

Someone needs to show the way--what to do. Direction will be assumed by others if the leaders do not lead.

During the emotional stress of combat, many soldiers will follow anyone who "does something."

*Effective, strong leadership is essential*



Effective leaders know and show the way.

**Replacements  
In Units:  
The Outsider**

The newcomer to a military unit may be regarded as an outsider. Because his skills are unknown to the new unit, mistrust by fellow soldiers will aggravate the stress of his first combat encounter. Initially, the replacement, with previous combat experience will be more readily accepted than the replacement with no combat experience. The unit, too, experiences stress, because the gap in it is filled by an unknown. Replacements must be quickly integrated into units.

Quotes from the Korean interviews illustrate the point:

There were examples of new men in a squad not being considered trustworthy until they had proved themselves through experience. This had a crippling effect on squad unity, and could not possibly aid squad planning or squad confidence.

The problem is complicated by the fact that:

As bad as overestimating an individual is underestimating him . . .

The lesson is clear. Before combat, get replacements acquainted with their new units, and vice versa.

**Defenses  
Against Stress:  
Leadership and  
Unit Cohesion**

Studies of high morale from WW II to the present, point to eight leadership and cohesion factors:

**LEADERSHIP AND COHESION FACTORS**

1. Trust and confidence in one's fellow soldiers.
2. Trust and confidence in the competence of and fairness of one's NCOs.
3. Trust and confidence in the competence and fairness of one's officers.
4. Trust and confidence in one's equipment.
5. Trust and confidence in the technical abilities and military power of the unit.
6. A sense of support from the civil community.
7. The belief in one's ability to defeat the enemy.
8. Trust and confidence in one's own combat ability.

## **Summary**

- ▼ **Background stress reduces combat effectiveness.**
- ▼ **Morale and disciplinary problems reflect stress.**
- ▼ **The opposing force is also under stress!  
Make it as tough for the enemy as possible.**
- ▼ **Accurate information reduces stress.**
- ▼ **Confidence in decisions reduces stress.**
- ▼ **Leaders reduce stress by keeping soldiers informed.**
- ▼ **Effective, strong leadership is essential.**

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOGNIZING STRESS

#### Diagnosis of Stress

Coping with stress requires, first, a recognition of the fact that it is present. The presence of stress can be recognized by certain signs. Just as the medical officer must diagnose a disease from its symptoms before he can treat it, a soldier must be able to recognize stress in order to cope with it effectively.

Stress often builds up slowly and therefore may not be easily recognized. Soldiers under stress are not always aware of it. For example, darkness may produce stress. As it begins to get dark, stress builds so slowly that it is not noticed. The soldier in darkness may not know why he feels anxious. As time goes on, stress continues to build and the soldier will show signs of stress without knowing it. Eventually, he may become a stress casualty.

*Stress may develop slowly*

Darkness is only one source of stress. In combat, everyone feels afraid. Some soldiers do not want to admit fear. They seem to be afraid of being afraid. Therefore, soldiers may hide their fear from themselves. Hidden or not, the fear is there and produces stress. To cope with stress, stress must be faced.

*Stress can be recognized*

#### Signs of Stress in Yourself

A list of stress signs, together with an explanation of each sign, appears in Appendix A. The signs are listed alphabetically, not in the order of priority. Before, during, or after combat, soldiers can show one, several, or many signs of stress. Many are very common. For example, a pounding heart, a dry mouth, and a tight stomach are well known to combat soldiers.



Signs of stress can be recognized.

The descriptions in Appendix A are worded so that they can be recognized by most people. All of the signs have been felt by some soldiers, at some time. In a mild form, they are normal. Coping with the sources of stress is essential. When one notices any of these signs in himself, it is time to make a coping effort.

*Learn to recognize stress in yourself*

In combat, even with the soldier's best effort to cope, stress may build up to a high level. Any soldier can reach a point at which he cannot cope any longer.

*Everyone has a breaking point*

### Signs of Stress in Others

To know when to help others in their coping efforts, one must be able to recognize signs of stress in others. The soldier next to you may show some or all of these signs. He may show them clearly, or they may be mostly hidden. Recognizing stress in others means watching the other person. The earlier you recognize the signs of stress, the more use your help will be.

*Learn to recognize stress in others*

When an individual nears the point at which he cannot cope any longer, others can help. Helping others to cope with stress is a duty that every soldier has to every other soldier. It is a very effective way of keeping a fellow soldier from becoming a stress casualty. And, more importantly, it might mean survival. A list of signs of stress in others, together with an explanation of each sign, is presented in Appendix B.

**FIRST AID FOR WOUNDS**



**FIRST AID FOR STRESS**

**Signs of Stress  
in the Unit**

Just as a soldier can show signs of stress, so can a military unit show signs of stress. The stress of a military unit differs from the sum of the stress experienced by its members. For example, after a long stretch of tough combat, every member of a unit will be exhausted. Yet, this does not mean there are problems with the unit. Rest and relaxation will restore unit functioning.

A list of signs of unit stress, together with an explanation of each sign is presented in Appendix C. These explanations picture the extreme forms of behavior. Leaders must be alert to recognize milder forms (see pages 11 and 15) and take steps before the extreme signs appear.

*Learn to recognize stress in the unit*



## **Summary**

- ▼ Stress may develop slowly.
- ▼ Stress can be recognized.
- ▼ Learn to recognize stress in yourself.
- ▼ Everyone has a breaking point.
- ▼ Learn to recognize stress in others.
- ▼ Learn to recognize stress in the unit.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTROLLING STRESS

#### Confidence

It is easier to cope with stress when there is an optimistic, confident feeling than when there is an unsure feeling. Confidence is the deep seated belief of every soldier that his unit can and will accomplish the combat mission, no matter what the odds may be. Military experience indicates that confident, cohesive units are able to withstand combat stress far better than units that lack confidence and cohesiveness. Confidence is the strongest bulwark against stress. Developing confidence is a major goal for every military leader. Confident baseball, football, or basketball teams win more games than their less confident opponents. Often they win against great odds. The same is true with confident military units. If confidence is to exist, every soldier must believe in himself, his equipment, other unit members, and his training. Above all, he must believe in the competence of his leaders. Developing combat confidence requires that each of these beliefs be instilled and maintained at every opportunity.

#### Self Confidence

When a soldier has demonstrated his ability to accept responsibility and to perform his job in a competent manner, he will feel confident about himself as a member of his unit. In combat, that confidence will help to keep stress from building up.

*Build self confidence*

Personal concerns must be dealt with and minimized in building self-confidence. The soldier must believe that his concerns will be taken care of, at least, temporarily. For example, if his dependents have accompanied him to an overseas assignment, he must be confident that their safety will be assured when he goes to battle.

Building self-confidence requires that the soldier possess a clear and detailed understanding of his duty assignments.

- ▼ How does the unit's mission capability depend on his performance?

- ▼ Who depends on his doing his job?
- ▼ On whom must he depend in the same way?
- ▼ What will happen in combat if his performance is poor and unreliable?

Without a clear understanding of his role, the soldier cannot appreciate his importance to his unit. Neither can he evaluate how well he performs that role.

*Each soldier must understand his role, his contribution to the unit, and to mission success*

## Responsibility

After understanding his role, the soldier becomes aware of his responsibility to his fellow soldiers and to his unit. Those in leadership positions are normally well aware of their responsibility, but all personnel must have such an awareness. Unless a feeling of responsibility exists, there is no strong incentive for developing competence. To believe in his own competence, the soldier needs proof of it. This proof can be obtained, for example, from comments of superiors during field exercises, informally from fellow soldiers, and from his own self-evaluation. Comments on performance should:

- ◆ be objective
- ◆ accent competent performance
- ◆ analyze what must be improved and how it can be improved

*Accentuate the positive*

When a soldier first assumes duties in a combat unit, it cannot be expected that he has developed his full competence. Even when well trained in his combat specialty, he has not had time to adjust to others with whom he must work. Efficient teamwork requires practice. Training provides the necessary practice. In training, the soldier can adjust himself to his team, and he can see his competence grow. Comments from superiors and others should always be geared to help each soldier appreciate his improvement, his contribution to the mission, and to make clear how further improvement can be achieved.

## **Confidence in Equipment**

A soldier must believe in his equipment. When equipment is not adequate or reliable, the soldier cannot perform his mission effectively. He will begin to believe that his inadequate or faulty equipment will let him down. He may feel helpless and hopeless. Such an attitude of "what's the use" seriously reduces confidence.

### ***Build confidence in equipment***

To have confidence in equipment, the soldier must know how to make the most of it. He must have a clear understanding of what his equipment can and cannot do. He must be shown how the equipment can be used to best advantage, and he must practice the procedures he was taught until they become second nature. Race drivers, for example, practice with their cars until they have a thorough "feel" of their car's characteristics. No equipment is perfect under all conditions.

Expert use of equipment also means being able to compensate for shortcomings and being able to recover from its failures. If his equipment is to support him dependably in combat, the soldier must be able to maintain it as well as operate it. For example, clearing a jammed weapon quickly may be more important in some circumstances than accuracy at maximum range. Also, carefully maintained equipment will fail less often than poorly maintained equipment. Effective maintenance requires conscientious maintenance. Efficient correction of malfunctions requires constant practice.

### ***Know and respect equipment***

When the soldier knows his equipment, how to operate it effectively, and how to maintain it efficiently, he will depend on it. Combined with a belief in his own competence, confidence in equipment will raise his total confidence in his fighting capability.

## Confidence in Unit

When each soldier in a unit has confidence in the competence and abilities of the other unit members, a more confident unit exists. Such confidence is genuine and long lasting. In combat, the unit must be given the highest loyalty. Accomplishment of the unit's mission must be the highest priority for all. This must be clearly understood by every soldier.

*Mission accomplishment has the highest priority*

Confidence in the unit leads to feelings of security which inhibit stress.

*Build confidence in fellow soldiers*

## Confidence in Training

Training helps each soldier to develop the skill requirements of his job. The soldier must be fully confident that he has received the best possible training for the conditions of combat and that the training has fully prepared him. This is accomplished through:

- ◆ realistic training
- ◆ pointing out relevancy of training to the conditions of the integrated battlefield
- ◆ providing refresher training and cross training
- ◆ systematic individual and integrated training

*Build confidence through skill and knowledge*

## Training for Combat

Each soldier must believe that his training is thorough and responsive to the requirements of the future battlefield. As a byproduct, he will believe in himself, in his ability to meet the performance requirements, and in his ability to emerge victorious. Accordingly, soldiers must recognize that: (1) their training was designed and developed to meet combat requirements, (2) they were provided with the ability to perform successfully on the integrated battlefield, and (3) other supporting units have received the same realistic training.

## Confidence in Leaders

Confidence in leaders develops when good leadership is demonstrated consistently. The soldier must be able to trust his leaders. If he cannot trust his leaders, he will not believe that he and his unit will succeed in combat.

Among other things, leaders have the responsibility for:

- ◆ setting the objectives
- ◆ planning the mission
- ◆ guiding the unit toward the objectives

Good leaders:

- ◆ set realistic objectives
- ◆ develop careful plans
- ◆ guide execution of plans resolutely

## Leadership Authority

Consistent, good leadership convinces subordinates that the leader best knows what must be done, how to do it, who should do it, and for how long. Authority accompanies leadership. However, this authority should be different from the automatic authority of military rank and position. It should be earned authority based on recognition by subordinates that the leader is competent and best able to guide the unit to success in combat.

*Effective leadership provides the foundation*

A leader who demonstrates competence and earns authority, develops the confidence of subordinates in his leadership. Without confidence in leaders, soldiers cannot feel confident of winning in combat.

The effective leader knows when to reward and when to punish soldiers. The following principles should be followed:

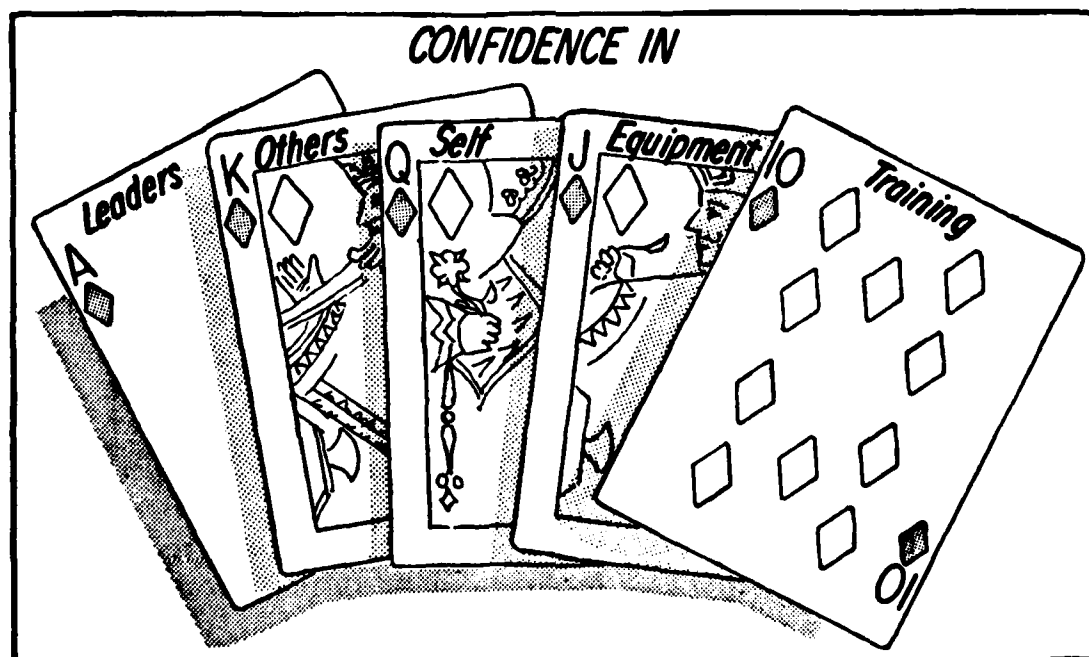
Reward outstanding performance in any and all possible ways:

- ◆ praise publicly
- ◆ assign responsibilities indicating trust
- ◆ recommend promotions and awards

- ♦ grant time off and leaves (when possible)
- ♦ reward units (teams, squads, platoons, companies) as well as individuals.

Punish fairly:

- ♦ immediately after the occasion
- ♦ punish the performance, not the person
- ♦ scale the punishment to the infraction
- ♦ limit duration of each punishment occasion
- ♦ explain the ways for avoiding further punishment.



This royal flush wins.

### **RULES OF THUMB FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH GOOD TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP**

1. Set realistic goals for progressive development of individual, team, and unit competence.
2. Systematically test the achievement of these goals.
3. Praise improvement and coach units toward achieving higher competence.
4. Single out individuals and teams for recognition of competence and develop a spirit of accomplishment.
5. Point out reasons for confidence at every opportunity.
6. Present realistic and detailed expectations about future combat conditions.
7. Point out that the enemy faces the same conditions.
8. Develop in each soldier confidence in:
  - self
  - equipment
  - unit
  - training
  - leadership

#### **Summary**

- ▼ Build self confidence.
- ▼ Each soldier must understand his role, his contribution to the unit, and to mission success.
- ▼ Accentuate the positive.



- ▼ Build confidence in equipment.
- ▼ Know and respect equipment.
- ▼ Mission accomplishment has the highest priority.
- ▼ Build confidence in fellow soldiers.
- ▼ Build confidence through skill and knowledge.
- ▼ Effective leadership provides the foundation.

## CHAPTER VI

### COPING WITH STRESS

#### Section 1. General

##### **What Coping Means**

Coping with stress means using techniques for holding stress in check. Coping techniques can keep stress from mounting. They can also help to lower excessive stress. Effective coping with combat stress will keep a soldier from becoming a stress casualty. Coping successfully will help keep the soldier on duty even under the most adverse conditions of the integrated battlefield.

*Soldiers can cope with combat stress*

The coping techniques presented in this chapter are useful and practical techniques which can be used in combat. Each works for some soldiers. However, each soldier must find out which one works for him or her. Each technique can be tailored to the individual soldier. Each soldier should find the technique(s) that works best for him or her and then learn the fine points.

Coping techniques must be learned and practiced. In combat, it is too late to practice coping with stress--just as it is too late to practice firing a weapon. Each soldier must know how to cope long before combat, or he will have difficulty coping with combat stress.

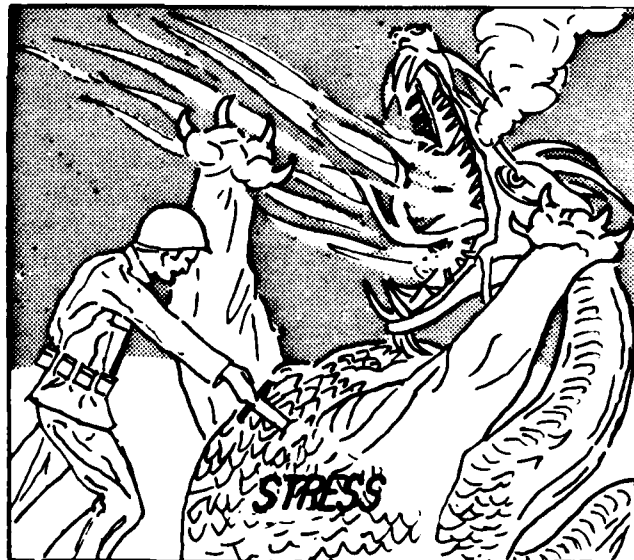
*Coping techniques must be learned and practiced*

##### **Facing Stress**

In combat, the soldier cannot run from, nor hide from stress. Stress must be faced and conquered. Denying sources of stress is an unhealthy way of dealing with them.

### DENIAL OF REALITY CAN BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

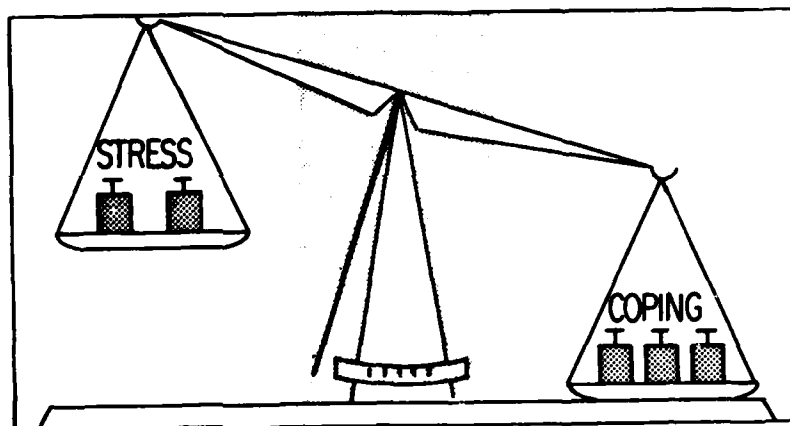
When the soldier, "pretends" that what is real is not real, he is denying reality. A soldier may convince himself that the danger around him is not real or he may "refuse" to concentrate on the situation or mission. Although a soldier may use denial in combat, it should be avoided. Denial of reality is dangerous and can lead to physical injury. For example, if a soldier denies the reality of a situation, he may react inappropriately to that situation.



Stress must be faced and conquered.

### **Coping with Stress**

The stresses of combat can be coped with. Soldiers and units who have trained for dealing with combat stress will succeed. Those who have not trained will have a lesser chance of coping successfully.



Tilt the scale to your side.

### Physical Conditioning

A strong relationship exists between physical stamina and succumbing to many combat sources of stress. Rigorous physical conditioning prior to combat will have a substantial effect on tolerance to the stresses of continuous operations. As the soldier's physical condition improves, he feels better about himself and this reduces stress.

*Physical conditioning raises tolerance to stress*

### Individual Responsibility

Preparing for stress, facing it, and coping with it is every soldier's personal responsibility. No boxer would go into a fight without training for it. He builds up his boxing skills, wind, speed, and endurance. It takes more than the technical skills to remain effective. The ability to function effectively in combat, for sustained periods of time, will increase if the soldier can cope with stresses of combat.

*Coping with combat stress is a skill*

The soldier, on an integrated battlefield, needs to know how to give himself an injection to counteract nerve gas. Similarly, on the integrated battlefield, the soldier should know how to use coping techniques to counteract stress.

*Learning to cope is the responsibility of each soldier*

### **Additional Help**

No soldier is alone in the battle against stress. Buddies and unit leaders can assist individual soldiers (see Section 3). Prayer has served many soldiers in warding off stress. Chaplain services can support efforts to gain spiritual strength. Professional social work, psychological, and psychiatric services are available to any soldier who has difficulty in coping with stress or dealing with personal problems. The Red Cross can also be of great service.

## **Section 2. Coping with Stress in Oneself**

### **Coping with Own Stress**

Coping with stress in oneself means achieving self-control over the stress process. The techniques help gain control over stress. Each technique can be used by any soldier to fight off stress that is building up. All the techniques, in some way, call for relaxation. Stress pushes the body to its limits and tenses it up. Relaxation reverses the process. The idea is to relax in order to make the stress level diminish.

*Relaxation helps control stress*

The techniques are not difficult. Anyone can master them! However, they must be practiced until they become automatic. The techniques must become so automatic that they do not need to be thought about when the user wants to relax. When a soldier has reached that point, he will be able to stop "butterflies" in his stomach, slow down heart rate, and lower blood pressure. Also, he will feel better.

*Any soldier can master the coping techniques*

### **Coping Techniques**

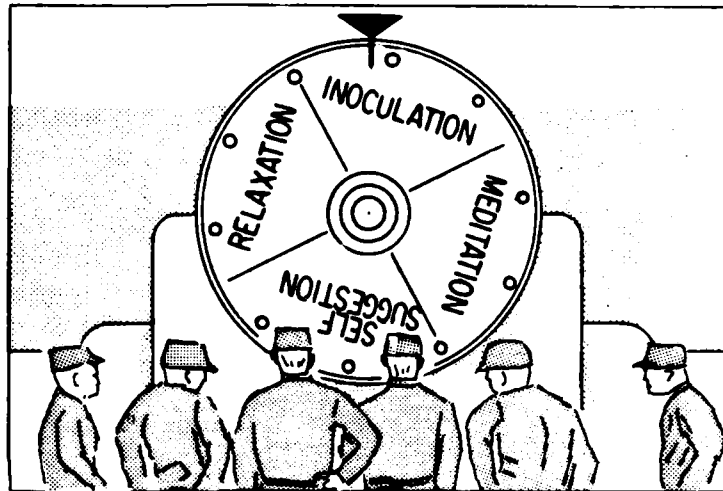
There are a number of techniques that each soldier can employ to control his stress. Detailed instructions for using these techniques are found in Appendix D. Consult Appendix D before trying any of the techniques. All techniques must be diligently practiced in order to work effectively.

- ▼ Relaxation Techniques. Relaxation techniques are methods for calming the mind and the body. The techniques provide a systematic method for obtaining full relaxation and, as a result, lower stress levels.
- ▼ Self-Suggestion. The self-suggestion technique combines self-suggestion and exercise to reach deep mental and physical relaxation. The technique produces feelings of heaviness and warmth that slow down the heart rate and make the heartbeat regular. There are four aspects to self-suggestion. They deal with the repetition of different kinds of phrases: relaxation, warmth, imagery, and activation.
- ▼ Meditation. Meditation employs aspects of the relaxation and self-suggestion techniques. There are several meditation techniques. In some, meditation is combined with breathing and physical exercises. Attention is often focused on a word or sound. As the word or sound is repeated, attention turns away from the outside world to the inner self. All forms of meditation require deep concentration.
- ▼ Inoculation. In medicine, inoculation is used to build up the body's defenses against disease. Dead or weak viruses are put into the body. They are easy to fight off, and fighting them off raises the ability to fight off live viruses later. In stress inoculation, stressful situations are brought into mind and ways of handling them are reviewed. The stress of the rehearsal situation is weak compared to the real situation. During the rehearsal phase, the ways of handling stressful situations are internalized. The result is a soldier who is better able to master stress when the real situation occurs.

*Learn to cope and relax*

**Applicability  
of Techniques**

The techniques, of course, cannot be used when soldiers are actually engaged in battle. During lulls in combat, any of the techniques will be applicable if they have been fully practiced in training. Soldiers who have learned to master stress will find themselves to be more effective in combat.



Each technique is a winner--pick a winner for you.

**Section 3. Coping with Stress in Others**

The previous section pointed out methods for coping which the soldier can implement on his own. This section describes methods which can be implemented to help others relieve their stress. These methods are detailed in Appendix E. Although they can be used alone, they are most effective when used in combination.

**Ventilation**

Ventilation (talking it out) is a good technique two soldiers can use to cope with stress. One soldier must be a good listener while the other "gets it all out." The key to using this technique is that the listener must be genuinely interested in the talker and what the talker has to

say. The listener does not interrupt the flow of talk from the other person. He listens, nods, or shows in other ways that he is paying attention. Once in a while, the listener says something helpful to the other person--something to make him feel better, or to make him ventilate further.

*The soldier should "get it all out"*

#### **Stress Counseling**

The ability to counsel another soldier to cope with stress requires some skill. The required skills pertain to identifying: the problem, ways the soldier has tried to deal with it, approaches that have and have not worked for the soldier, and new sources of action for the soldier to try. A major advantage to stress counseling is that the soldier being counseled can learn new ways of responding to sources of stress. The ability to respond effectively to sources of stress can lead to improved self confidence.

#### **Crisis Management**

Crisis management is a technique designed to provide immediate help to the soldier whose behavior indicates that he is unable to function adequately. "Crisis" implies an emergency situation and is most likely to occur when a soldier is under extreme stress. The goals of crisis management are to return the soldier to the level of functioning that he maintained before the crisis, to help him cope with the sources of stress, and to prevent a recurrence. The crisis manager's functions are to: (1) observe and calm the soldier if he is emotional, (2) protect him and others from imminent danger, (3) collect relevant information, and (4) take appropriate action.

Crisis management takes place at the crisis scene. The skills required must be learned. Although many of the methods are similar to those used in counseling, dealing with soldiers in crisis calls for special skills.

#### **Peer Feedback**

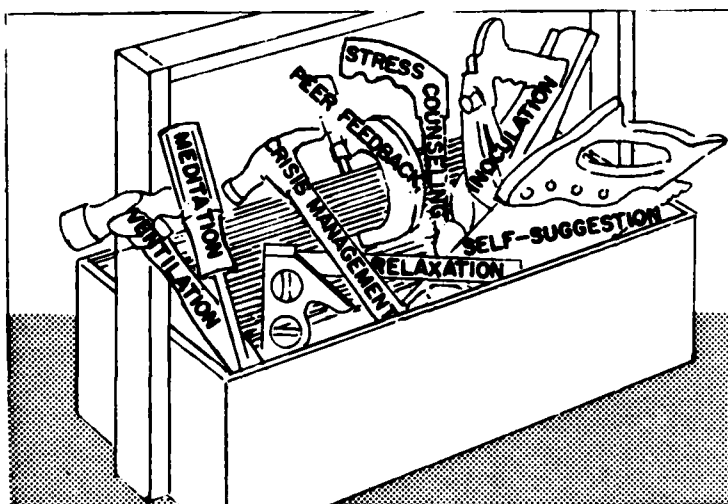
The peer feedback technique for coping with sources of stress involved the use of two or more soldiers who review and evaluate the actions and behaviors of other soldiers who need help in coping. The peers' function is to point out coping strengths and weaknesses in the soldier being helped. This technique has two advantages. First, the soldier under stress is helped to select more appropriate coping techniques. Second, the evaluators are helped to monitor their own coping techniques as a result of discussing somebody else's techniques.



## Applicability of Techniques

Ventilation, stress counseling, and crisis management techniques are applicable before conflict and during lulls in battle. Peer feedback is most appropriate prior to combat or when opportunity for prolonged rest is available.

The table on page 55 will be useful when signs of stress are observed in others. The table indicates coping techniques which are best suited, moderately suited, and least suited for dealing with different stress signs before combat, during combat, and after combat. For example, the most appropriate coping technique to use with a soldier who has an emotional outburst in combat is ventilation. However, moderately appropriate coping techniques for use in combat with emotional outbursts are stress counseling, and crisis management.



These tools control stress.

# Applicability of Coping Techniques to Various Stress Signs Before, During, and Post Combat

## Coping Techniques

Sign	Relaxation			Self Suggestion			Meditation			Inoculation			Ventilation			Stress Counseling			Crisis Management			Peer Feedback		
	B	C	P	B	C	P	B	C	P	B	C	P	B	C	P	B	C	P	B	C	P	B	C	P
Excessive Preoccupations	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	2
Emotional Outbursts	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	1	3
Excitability	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
Impulsive Behavior	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3
Restlessness	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	2
Risk Taking	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3
Excessive Smoking	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Speech	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	2
Trembling	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3

B = Before Combat  
 C = During Combat  
 P = Post Combat  
 1 = Slightly Appropriate  
 2 = Moderately Appropriate  
 3 = Highly Appropriate

## Summary

- ▼ Soldiers can cope with combat stress.
- ▼ Coping techniques must be learned and practiced.
- ▼ Physical conditioning raises tolerance to stress.
- ▼ Coping with combat stress is a skill.
- ▼ Learning to cope is the responsibility of each soldier.
- ▼ Relaxation helps control stress.
- ▼ Any soldier can master the coping techniques.
- ▼ Learn to cope and relax.
- ▼ The soldier should "get it all out."

## CHAPTER VII

### STRESS MANAGEMENT

#### Perspectives on Stress in Units

Reactions to different sources of stress vary from soldier to soldier. Soldiers respond differently, based on their perceptions of situations. Such perceptions stem from personal backgrounds and the ways individual soldiers have learned to react to stress provoking situations.

During combat, stress builds up in each soldier, as well as in the unit as a whole. A sound, confident unit will recover if given sufficient rest. However, the form of modern ground combat makes it unlikely that much rest can be allowed. Units must learn to deal with stress in the absence of prolonged rest. The techniques in this chapter are leadership tools that should be used in dealing with stress.

#### Leader Responsibility

The leader has responsibility for stress management. This responsibility includes:

- ◆ looking out for the welfare of his or her troops
- ◆ initiating a stress coping program
- ◆ supporting the stress coping program
- ◆ providing information to reduce stress
- ◆ ensuring that each soldier has mastered at least one stress coping technique

The primary stress management technique is to ensure that the troops know that their leaders are doing their best to provide for them. The basic necessities of garrison life assume even greater importance on the battlefield. The troops must be assured that the leader is making every possible effort to:

- ◆ look out for their welfare before his own
- ◆ provide sufficient ammunition
- ◆ keep them well supplied with food, water, and other essentials under the circumstances
- ◆ get mail, news, and information to them
- ◆ assure the best cover and shelter
- ◆ get the best medical, logistical, and other support
- ◆ assure that they obtain as much required rest as possible

This technique for maintaining morale, has always been, and will continue to be a primary leadership concern. Soldiers with high morale perceive dangers differently than they would if their needs were not cared for or if they believed that their leaders were not adequately concerned for their welfare.

Coping with stress is an important combat skill. Whether or not units can accomplish their missions and whether or not soldiers can endure after days of continuous combat will depend in part on how well the unit encourages and supports individual efforts to cope with stress.

*Each unit should have a systematic stress coping program*

Stress coping indoctrination should be part of every unit's combat training. Indoctrination needs to be followed by a program of action. A variety of techniques for dealing with stress is contained in this Manual. Programs can be designed incorporating these techniques. The real ability to cope with stress in combat depends primarily on previous training.

Stress coping programs must be initiated and maintained. Stress coping skills require practice, as do other combat skills. Programs need to be tailored to the units implementing them. They need to be improved as experience grows. Above all, coping with stress must be practiced under conditions that match, as nearly as possible, the conditions of future combat.

#### **Dealing with Stress Casualties**

Every soldier has a breaking point. Stress discipline can substantially delay, but cannot totally eliminate the breaking point. Combat duration and intensity may build up stress so quickly and to such a degree in some soldiers that they will find coping exceedingly difficult.

Just as the wounded soldier requires medical attention, so does the stress casualty. The skills for handling stress casualties begin with the company medic in the combat unit. The medic should decide whether or not stress casualties should be sent to the nearest medical facility.

*Stress casualties may require medical attention*

Three principles of dealing with soldiers that show combat stress have been developed as a result of battlefield experience. Following these principles not only helps combat stressed soldiers but conserves the fighting strength. These principles are:

1. Immediacy--help the soldier to cope at the earliest possible time.
2. Proximity--help the soldier to cope within his squad, platoon, company, or battalion area, in that order, whichever is most feasible. The further the soldier is helped from his primary group, the more difficult it is to help the individual and return him to normal duty.
3. Expectancy--expect the individual to act like a soldier and expect him to return to normal duty after a sufficient, but brief (at the most two days), period of rest.

An example from WW II experience illustrates the point. A soldier came to the battalion aid station with gross tremors and a sickly smile. "Don't send me back to the rear. I'll be all right!" he insisted. He was given a cigarette, which he could not light because of his tremors. He tried to joke about it. He was sent to the kitchen area for two days and nights. When he came back, he had lost most of his tremors, but he now had a tic in the form of eyeblinking and head twitching. He was still tense, but eager to rejoin his outfit.

For three months, he carried on in active combat with a high degree of efficiency. Once when his company was launching an attack, all the officers were killed or wounded in the first half hour. As the ranking noncommissioned officer in the outfit, he led the company until a relief officer assumed command. He was later wounded in the back by a shell fragment and evacuated as a surgical casualty. In his particular company he was more typical than not.

The decision to send the stress casualty for medical treatment should be guided by these considerations:

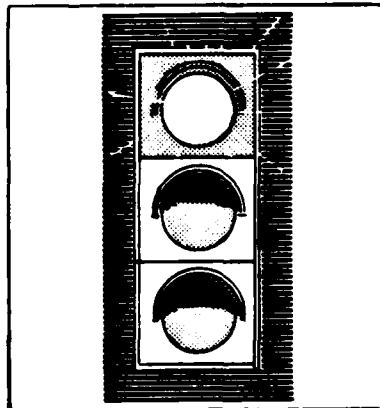
- ▼ Is the soldier functioning so ineffectively that he cannot be retained in the unit?
- ▼ Will retention of the soldier in the unit negatively affect the unit's capability?
- ▼ Is the soldier dangerous to himself or to others?

*Most stress casualties can be treated at company and battalion levels and returned to duty*

In WW II, most stress casualties who required treatment beyond the battalion level were returned to duty in their own division or somewhere in the combat theatre. In the Korean War, 88 percent were returned to duty in their divisions and 97 percent were returned to duty somewhere in the combat theatre. An evaluation of stress casualty returns in the Korean War indicated that they functioned as satisfactorily after returning from treatment as those who had never received treatment.

#### **Effective Leadership**

Effective leadership can reduce the impact of stress in a number of ways. Therefore, the leader should understand both the sources of stress in combat and the reactions to them. In addition, the leader must be able to deal with stress problems before they get out of hand.



Recognize the danger signals.

During WW II one battalion commander gathered the men together just before a new offensive and spoke as follows: "I know as well as you do that the going has been tough. Maybe I sweat it out more than you because I have more to worry about. But you've done a fine job and I'm proud of every single man in my outfit. I assure you that everything possible will be done to give you the best available support, and I will not order you to attack unless I'm confident that you have a real chance to succeed." He went on: "The harder we fight now, the sooner we can finish this mess and get back to living the way we want."

That speech demonstrated the wisdom of using the common-sense approach to dealing with stress. Had this commander preached about the advantages of democracy over fascism, or about the evil Hitler had wrought, his words would have fallen on deaf ears. Instead, he seized on the strong motivating forces of his men--respect for him as a leader, a desire to remain in good standing with the other men, and an urge to participate in the accomplishments of the unit.

No simple guidance can cover every type of person or every stress casualty situation. However, specific "do's" and "don't's" can be suggested. These suggestions are given in the table on pages 62 and 63, which covers typical situations. Cool judgment should be used in conjunction with each suggestion. Note the repeated advice. "Be aware of own feelings" in the "Do's" column, and the warnings about forms of conduct in the "Don't's" column. It is important that the person in charge be in firm control of himself or herself and use neutral rather than inflammatory language. To provide help effectively, be aware of how the victim's behavior affects you. What needs to be done is more important than what the victim is doing.

#### **Maintain Control**

When a unit has become highly stressed in long, tough combat, it needs direct and forceful leadership. The leader must show his authority, knowledge, and skill. The leader must ensure that his decisions are carried out. Troops need to be certain that competent leadership is guiding them. Troops must be shown that they have determined, forceful, and effective leadership.

***Leaders must be in control***



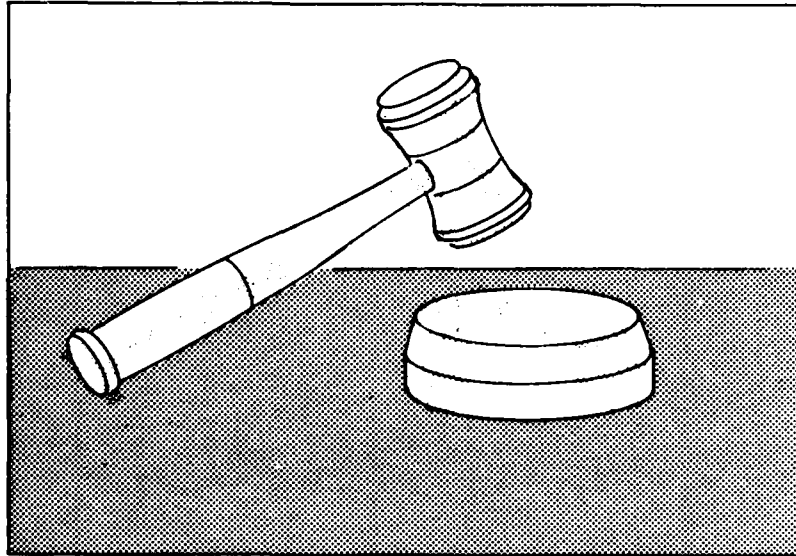
## STRESS REACTIONS AND HELPFUL MEASURES

(SOURCE: Instructor's Plan Book for Psychological First Aid, New York State Department of Health)

TYPE	SYMPTOMS	DO'S	DON'T'S
Normal reaction	Trembling--muscular tension Perspiration Nausea Mild diarrhea Urinary frequency Pounding heart--rapid breathing Anxiety	Good individual support 1. Good leadership 2. Group identification 3. Morale and motivation 4. Communication 5. Good training Take appropriate action	Don't overreact Don't suggest that this is a problem Don't ridicule Don't be insensitive
Underactive/Depressed (slowed down, numbed)  NOTE: Most common	Stand or sit without moving or talking Vacant expression Seem to be without emotion	Establish contact gently Try to get them to tell you what happened Show empathy Recognize feelings of resentment Find simple, routine job Give warm food, drink, and allow to smoke	Don't overwhelm with pity Don't administer sedatives, except as last resort Don't act out feelings of resentment
Individual panic (blind flight)  NOTE: Not common	Unreasoning attempt to flee Loss of judgment Uncontrolled weeping Wild running about	Try kindly firmness first Give something warm to eat or drink or a smoke Get help, if necessary, to isolate Show empathy Be aware of own feelings	Don't use brutal restraint Don't strike Don't douse with water Don't administer sedatives, except as last resort

TYPE	SYMPTOMS	DO'S	DON'T'S
Overactive/Manic	Argumentative Talk rapidly Job inappropriately done Make endless suggestions Jump from job to job	Let them talk about it Find them jobs which require physical activity Give something warm to eat or drink or a smoke Supervision is necessary Be aware of own feelings	Don't tell them they should not feel the way they do Don't administer sedatives Don't argue with them
Physical	Severe nausea and vomiting Inability to use some parts of the body	Show them you are interested Try to find them some small job to make them forget Make comfortable to await medical help Be aware of own feelings	Don't tell them there is nothing wrong with them Don't blame or ridicule Don't call attention to disability

Techniques for maintaining authority are the same as those for establishing it.



**Leaders must assert authority.**

#### **Strengthen Unit Cohesion**

Unit cohesion must be established before the unit goes into combat. Shared combat experiences will tend to make cohesion even stronger. The personal feelings of unit members for each other and for their leaders are a potent antidote for stress.

At every opportunity, leaders should:

- ◆ praise individuals and teams
- ◆ point out the importance of the platoon's/squad's/team's role in accomplishing mission goals
- ◆ emphasize the importance of team effort
- ◆ express confidence in the unit

***Unit cohesion must be maintained in combat***

## **Disseminate Information**

Uncertainty is a major source of stress. Experience from past combat has shown the importance of passing on information. Leaders need to tell their troops all they can about their situation and planned actions. By keeping the troops informed of the evolving battlefield situation, it is possible to allay some of the fear of the unknown and the anxiety generated by the rapidly changing combat environment. Of course, security needs impact on what can be told.

An honest, realistic account of the situation should be provided. Maintain as full a flow of information as possible. Continue disseminating information. In particular, positive and expected aspects should be pointed out.

### *Disseminate Information*

Uncertainty about conditions at home or among dependents also contributes to stress. Mail should be disseminated as often and as quickly as possible. Also, a program, instituted before deployment, which advises dependents on the importance of mail to their loved ones will help to assure that each soldier receives mail and information from home.

## **Provide Rest**

In continuous operations, fatigue from lack of sleep will be a serious source of stress. Breaks in combat will be irregular and infrequent. Scheduled and extended sleep is not likely.

### *Sleep discipline is a combat requirement*

After going without sleep for 48 hours or more, almost no one can think clearly and make good decisions. Since the leader's role requires thinking and decision making, leader's need the most rest and sleep. Leaders must use every moment that can be spared for sleep.

If rest and sleep cannot be allowed for the unit as a whole, sleep time must be found for individual soldiers or teams. All soldiers will not be needed all of the time. During extended operations, rest and sleep should be encouraged at every opportunity.

*A rested soldier is a more combat ready soldier*

*Leaders must rest*

*The troops must rest*

*Encourage rest and sleep at every opportunity*

**Task Management  
Under Stressful  
Conditions**

1. Task Allocation--Sharing the Load. Overloading a soldier, or soldiers, with the assignment of too many tasks or responsibilities can be a major source of stress. Fair allocation of tasks among available soldiers in the unit will, not only result in decreased stress, but also may lead to improved effectiveness. Assignment of an even load of tasks should be a part of mission planning and therefore precede actual task assignments. Since conditions in combat may not be constant and certain soldiers, to whom tasks were to be allocated in the mission plans, will not be available, changes will be required. However, the principle of allocating tasks fairly should be adhered to as closely as possible.

*Allocate tasks fairly*

2. Task Matching--Fitting the Man to the Task. Awareness of job requirements and the soldiers' abilities to meet these requirements are necessary if the leader is to make good job-soldier matches. Judicious matches are exceedingly beneficial.

*Match job requirements and soldiers' abilities*

3. Task Paralleling--Error Minimization. Task paralleling involves the assignment of a task to two different soldiers who perform the task at the same time. Paralleling has the effect of assuring increased effectiveness, since two soldiers are performing a task. That is, every step of the task has two people looking at it. When soldiers function under stress (for example, extreme fatigue) they are less likely to perform a task as well as might be expected. Paralleling assignments raises the reliability of task execution. There will be a greater likelihood that the task will be accomplished successfully. Task paralleling also has a stress coping effect on the unit because reliability of accomplishing the mission's goal is better accomplished when two soldiers perform the same task than when one does it alone. Task paralleling works best when mental alertness is absolutely essential.

*When soldiers are stressed  
and accomplishment of every step in a  
task is crucial, assign two soldiers to the task*

4. Task Sharing--Mutual Support. Task sharing is another tool which leaders can use when assigning stressed soldiers to the performance of their tasks. Unlike task paralleling, task sharing involves the performance of some (not all) of the steps of a task by two soldiers. Sharing requires coordination between the two soldiers, since they will be working together at the same time, on a particular task. Task sharing works best for physical tasks (carrying heavy objects, loading and firing weapons), rather than mental tasks. Tasks which are very tedious and repetitive are likely to be performed more effectively when they are shared.

*When soldiers are stressed  
and the accomplishment of certain steps in a  
task is crucial, assign two soldiers to those steps*

5. Cross Training--Spread of Competence. Task paralleling and task sharing techniques largely assume that soldiers are cross trained. Cross trained soldiers are able to competently perform tasks of a duty position other than

their primary one. They can readily step into other positions due to their competence to perform the tasks of their secondary position(s). A cross trained soldier will be able to take on responsibilities of another soldier who is overloaded or exhausted. In cross training, decisions have to be made about who to cross train, for which tasks, in which order. The tasks which should have the highest priority for cross training are those that are most stressful and vulnerable to degradation in combat. In general, these are tasks that require complex evaluation, rapid decision making, vigilance demands, and other cognitive requirements as would be involved in understanding, thinking, and planning.

*Use cross trained soldiers  
to perform tasks in key positions*

#### **Applicability of Techniques**

Cross training must be accomplished prior to combat, so that the benefits of such training may be utilized during combat. Task matching, paralleling, and sharing, though requiring no special training, should be practiced prior to combat. Points mentioned earlier, though capable of being used prior to combat, can be very effective when used to manage stress during combat.

#### **Summary**

- ▼ Each unit should have a systematic stress coping program.
- ▼ Stress casualties may require medical attention.
- ▼ Most stress casualties can be treated at company and battalion levels and returned to duty.
- ▼ Leaders must be in control.
- ▼ Unit cohesion must be maintained in combat.
- ▼ Disseminate information.

- ▼ Sleep discipline is a combat requirement.
- ▼ A rested soldier is a more combat ready soldier.
- ▼ Leaders must rest.
- ▼ The troops must rest
- ▼ Encourage rest and sleep at every opportunity.
- ▼ Allocate tasks fairly.
- ▼ Match job requirements and soldiers' abilities.
- ▼ When soldiers are stressed and the accomplishment of every step in a task is crucial, assign two soldiers to the task.
- ▼ When soldiers are stressed and the accomplishment of certain steps in a task is crucial, assign two soldiers to those steps.
- ▼ Use cross trained soldiers to perform tasks in key positions.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Signs of Stress in Yourself**

## Signs of Stress in Yourself

Note: The following signs are normal reactions to the stress of combat. They are to be expected. When soldiers begin to feel one or more of these signs, stress coping techniques should be used to try to decrease the intensity of the signs. The signs of stress that are recognized in yourself may also be seen in others (see Appendix B for additional signs of stress).

Aggression. Feeling angry, sometimes at the whole world. The feelings may be translated into behavior that hurts or destroys someone or something. You may know that lashing out is wrong, but cannot stop it.

Anxiety. Feeling afraid without any specific or immediate threat. The anxious person is often tense, worried, jumpy, cannot concentrate, and feels unhappy. He or she may be unable to sleep or may have bad dreams.

Apathy. Feelings of not caring about anything and not wanting to do anything. The apathetic person often does not care what happens to him or her, whether the prospects are good or bad. He or she may not even have the initiative to protect himself or herself from harm.

Depression. The depressed person feels hopeless and worthless. His or her outlook on the present and on the future is grim and full of gloom. At the same time, he or she may feel suspicious or fearful of the future. Even normal pleasures no longer have a cheering effect.

Diarrhea. Bowel movements are loose and occur often. Under stress, this happens for no other clear reason. Often the bowels cannot be controlled.

Dry Mouth. The mouth feels as if it is full of cotton. There is no saliva (spit), and swallowing is difficult.

Fatigue. Feeling tired and weary is natural after long hours of hard work or combat. Fatigue is not normal and a sign of stress when the feeling persists after rest, or when the effort has not been so great as to warrant the degree of weariness that is felt.

Forgetfulness. This usually means that a planned action is not taken. A check in a procedure may not be made. An order acknowledged earlier may not be remembered. Forgetfulness is similar to inability to concentrate, but involves longer time intervals.

"Freezing." Freezing, in this sense, means that some muscles cannot be made to move. Legs or arms or hands or both will not obey. They seem to be "frozen."

Frustration. Frustration results when something that is wanted or needed is denied. The want may be for rest, food, a hot shower, or it may be for an action, (get out of this situation). Frustration may be felt when anger has no outlet, fear cannot be escaped, or when a person feels powerless to act.

Guilt. A feeling which occurs when a person feels that he or she has done or wants to do something wrong--of being a "bad" person. Sometimes the thought leading to guilt may be unconscious. A soldier may feel guilty after seeing another soldier wounded or killed. The hidden thought may be "I'm glad it was him and not me," or "If I had been doing my job better, he wouldn't have been killed."

Hot and Cold Spells. A feeling of hot or cold, regardless of the temperature of the air. Often, feeling hot is followed by feeling cold, then hot again.

Inability to Concentrate. This is similar to forgetfulness for very short time delays. In hearing someone speak, the beginning of the sentence is forgotten by the time the end is reached. In trying to think how to do something, facts cannot be recalled. Also, what comes next cannot be remembered.

Irritability. Feeling annoyed by anything and everything. Whatever anyone else does or says is felt as wrong. These feelings may even apply to oneself.

Loneliness. A feeling of being all alone and isolated from others (fellow soldiers, friends, family). Often there is a feeling that no one understands or cares about one's troubles.

Low Self-Esteem. Feeling that one is not worthy and that one's performance is not good. Others are seen as better, more worthy, and able to do a better job than oneself. There is a lack of self-confidence.

Moodiness. Feelings that are milder, but similar to apathy or depression. Moodiness usually shows itself by not wanting to talk, share experiences, or take part in group activities.

Nausea. Feelings of wanting to throw up. Sometimes food is regurgitated. At times there are only "dry heaves." At other times there is just a feeling of being near to throwing up.

Nervousness. Feeling jumpy, tense, irritable, distracted. The word "nervousness" covers a variety of feelings without being very precise about them.

Nightmares. Bad dreams that come often. For many people, the same bad dream comes back again and again. After waking up there may be feelings of fear or depression.

Numbness/Tingling. Feelings, usually in the hands, fingers, or feet, of numbness. Sometimes they tingle as if a thousand needles were stabbing these parts.

Pounding Heart. For no apparent reason, the heart is beating heavy and fast. Sometimes a threat (danger) is present, but not always. Very often there is also a shortness of breath.

Rationalization. \* Blaming someone else for one's inability to achieve some goal or talking oneself out of the desirability of a goal. For example, a soldier might blame others for his unit's inability to hold back enemy advances by claiming that he had inadequate support.

Sweating. Heavy sweating, even with normal or cool temperatures. The sweating is not due to hard or heavy work. It begins with the palms and armpits, but may include the face and body.

\* From FM 22-100: Military Leadership.

Tension. Feelings which accompany waiting for or wanting to do something--to act. Often it is not clear what is to be done. Tension is different from frustration. Tension occurs when one is getting ready for some demanding effort that will occur in the future, and there is no immediate outlet.

Urinary Frequency. Frequent urination is a common sign of stress. In combat, involuntary urination is also common. Without knowing it or wanting to, the person wets his pants. Often, he may not know that this has happened until he feels wet.

**APPENDIX B**

**Signs of Stress in Others**

## Signs of Stress in Others

Note: When the following signs are seen in other soldiers, stress coping techniques should be used to decrease the intensity of the signs. The signs of stress that are recognized in others, may also be seen in one-self (see Appendix A for additional signs of stress).

Alcohol. Alcohol and combat do not mix! Some can drink larger quantities of alcohol than others and still not get drunk. A drunken soldier in combat is a danger to himself and others. Drinking too much and too often increases stress. It will not help. To cope with it, the source of stress must be faced. Drinking too much is a sure sign of ineffective coping with stress.

Denial. A stressed soldier may try to "escape" by re-interpreting the situation. Ignoring a situation is another form of denial. A soldier may display signs of stress through unwillingness to face realistically threatening situations, withdrawal, or procrastination.

Drugs. Drugs not only mask stress (hide it), but actually make things worse. Drugs also make for an unreal world. The real world must be dealt with in combat. The soldier who takes drugs will not be effective, although he may think he is. He is a danger to himself and to his unit. Use of drugs is no way to cope with combat stress!

Emotional Outbursts. When stress is high, self-control is lowered. Anger may flare up for small reasons. The individual may have crying jags and may show fear and talk a great deal about being scared. The stressed person shows a lot of emotion in all of his or her behavior. This may build up more and more, or it may happen suddenly.

Excitability. A soldier may become agitated easily. In combat he may jump at sudden noises or may laugh too loud at a small joke. He may be restless and unable to sit still. He may talk too much. To anything and everything, he reacts too much.

Impulsive Behavior. The soldier may act without thinking in ways that do not make good sense. A person may do them "out of the blue" or react too fast to a situation, not thinking about what his or her action may lead to.

Inadequate Eating or Drinking. The stressed soldier may not feel a need to eat or drink adequately. Lack of food and water may lead to feelings of weakness and dehydration. Inadequate eating and drinking can contribute to an increased state of stress.

Negativism.\* Taking a negative, resistive attitude toward situations. For example, a soldier's request may have been denied by his commander, so he or she becomes defensive and negative to all recommendations that the commander makes.

One Track Thinking. Consistently and excessively performing a given action or talking about a given topic may indicate a soldier under stress. For example, the soldier who overly checks and rechecks a given detail such as escape routes, sentry posting, or gun coordinates may be indicating a state of stress.

Regressive Reactions.\* Failure to act one's age and to be unable to deal constructively with reality by reverting to behaviors of an earlier age, e. g., temper tantrums or pouts. Some soldiers may attempt this form of behavior because it worked for them and they got their way when they were children.

Restlessness. The soldier cannot relax. He or she has to move constantly. If walking is not possible, fidgeting with equipment may occur. When trying to rest, the soldier cannot lie still.

Risk Taking. Showing courage under fire does not mean taking unnecessary risks. The reckless soldier may be showing signs of stress. He exposes himself and others to unnecessary danger.

Smoking. Many people have a strong need to smoke when they are tense. Smoking becomes a sign of high stress when it is excessive. The person smokes constantly. When circumstances prevent it, irritability may follow.

\*From FM 22-100: Military Leadership.



Speech Disorder. Changes in the way a soldier normally speaks may be a sign of stress. Speech may become much faster or slower than before. It may be unclear (slurred). Sentences may not be complete so that they do not make clear sense. Sometimes the person may start mumbling.

Trembling. Most often the hands begin to shake first. Weapons cannot be held steady. Small objects can be adjusted or fitted together only with difficulty. Sometimes the legs or even the whole body begin to tremble.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Signs of Stress in the Unit**

## Signs of Stress in the Unit

AWOL. This term covers all unauthorized absences from duty. It includes those absences that never appear on official records. High AWOL rates reflect a dislike of duties, of conditions in the unit, and a lack of loyalty.

Bickering. Frequent conflicts among members of a unit signal a serious problem. Bickering, often over petty matters, reflects a lack of concern with unit objectives--with getting things done. When soldiers are riled by conditions, one outlet is through a clash with other soldiers. Feelings of a common purpose are disintegrating.

Dissatisfaction. When unit morale is low, complaints rise. Eventually, almost anything will be a cause for a complaint. Many are brought to the attention of the leadership. Even more are voiced to peers. Some complaints are justified, but most are petty.

Lack of Cohesion. Soldiers have little or no pride in their unit or themselves. They badmouth the unit, its leadership, and its members. They enter any test of capability, or competition with other units, in a spirit of defeat. Rumors are mostly negative. The soldiers "don't care."

Ignoring Orders. Standing orders, established SOPs, and established policy are ignored. Their intent, and even their letter are not obeyed (evaded, circumvented). Instead of trying to comply, soldiers try to get around the rules.

Insubordination. Instead of following orders, soldiers challenge them. They talk back rather than obey promptly. Their reasons focus on minor points. Objections are not valid and constructive. The spirit is one of obstruction instead of willing cooperation.

Low Productivity. Soldiers report late in the morning, they take long breaks, work slowly, and leave early at night. They blame equipment, procedures, or supply problems for not getting the job done. They show little initiative. Maintenance is performed poorly. Schedules are not maintained. Excuses are made instead of showing results.

Sensitivity to Criticism. In the "healthy" unit, a "dressing down" from a superior is a spur to greater effort; in the "ailing" organization, there is only resentment. Excuses are offered. Excuses that cannot be made to the superior are "chewed over" with peers. Criticisms are thought unreasonable and unjustified.

Sick Call. Any excuse will do for reporting sick. The reasons given are often vague ailments and minor physical problems. Treatment is claimed to be ineffective. Medical personnel may suspect emotional rather than physical problems.

**APPENDIX D**

**Techniques for Coping with Stress in Self**

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## TECHNIQUES FOR COPING WITH STRESS IN SELF

### Relaxation

The relaxation technique should be practiced every day for about 20 minutes until it is learned. After it is learned, relaxation can be achieved very quickly. At first, practice in a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. As you master the technique, you will no longer need a quiet place. You will be able to make the technique work in noisy, crowded environments, and even in combat.

Do not expect success right away. The first time you tried pitching, shooting baskets, typing, firing a weapon, or close order drill you did not do well either. As you know, with conscientious practice you improved. It is important to remember the sequence in the exercise. At the beginning, team up with another soldier. Let him or her coach you through the exercise. Very soon, you will remember each step of the exercise so that you will be able to do the exercise by yourself. Don't get too concerned about doing the exercise perfectly. The idea is to relax.

### Breathing Exercise

When you are under stress, your body needs a lot of oxygen. Breathing brings air, and the oxygen in it, to your body. When you are under stress your breathing is rapid and shallow, but when you are relaxed your breathing is slow and deep. Rapid and shallow breathing does not take in a lot of air. The purpose of the breathing exercise is to change the breathing when you are under stress from rapid and shallow to slow and deep. The breathing exercise, described below, can be done alone, at any time.

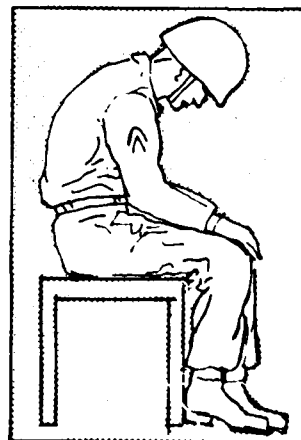
1. Sit comfortably.
2. Close your eyes and think about your breathing. After initial practice, perform the exercise with your eyes open.
3. Think only about your breath flowing in and out. Use only your nose to breathe.

4. Think these words to your self several times while you are breathing: "I am relaxing. I am breathing smoothly and evenly. Fresh air is flowing in and out of my lungs. I feel calm and refreshed."
5. Keep thinking of your breath as it flows in and out; think only of breathing evenly.
6. After five minutes stand up slowly, stretch, and resume what you were doing.

#### Relaxation Exercise

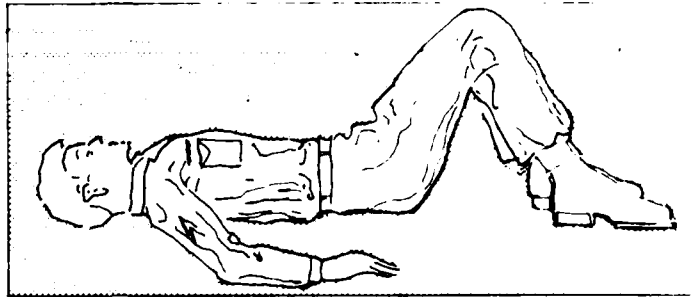
1. Get into a comfortable position, which you will maintain throughout the exercise.

Sit in a chair with your head and body slumped forward and arms on your thighs.



- or -

Lie on your back with legs and arms slightly apart from your body.



- or -

Sit on the floor with your legs crossed under you and your arms on your thighs.



2. Stretch your body all over.
3. Close your eyes (after a while try it with your eyes open) and think about your favorite, most quiet place. Perhaps you like the beach, or a lake, or the woods. Hear the waves on the beach. Feel the warm sand and the sun. Smell the breeze. Listen to the birds. Be there!
4. Feel the peace all around you, and notice how calm and relaxed you are.



5. If your mind wanders, say to yourself: "I am calm. I am safe. I am relaxed." Or, concentrate on your breathing and repeat the word "one" after each exhalation.
6. Breathe slowly and deeply through your nose. Let out each breath as slowly as you can through your nose.
7. Relax all tense muscles from head to toes. Start with the toes.

Toes. Curl your toes toward the soles of your feet and tense them for about five seconds. Take a deep breath, then let it out slowly and let up on your toes. Then say "relax" to yourself three times.

Calves. Point your toes up toward your face and tighten your calves. Hold it for about five seconds. Take a deep breath, then let it out slowly, and let the tension go at the same time. Again, say "relax" to yourself three times.

Thighs. With your legs out straight, point your toes up toward your face and tense up your thighs. Hold it for about five seconds. As before, take a deep breath, release it, and let up on the tension, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

Buttocks. Tense your buttocks by pushing them down. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

Stomach. Tense it as you would for a punch. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

Chest. Press the palm of one hand against the other. This will tighten your chest. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

**Shoulders.** Tense your shoulders by shrugging them and bringing your head down as far as it will go. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

**Arms.** With your arms out in front of you, tighten your fists, forearms, and upper arms. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

**Throat.** Tense your throat by pressing your chin down against your chest. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

**Neck and Head.** Press your head back and down against your shoulders. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times.

**Face.** This includes your forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and chin. Make a "funny face" by wrinkling your forehead, closing your eyes tightly, and gritting your teeth, all at the same time. Hold for about five seconds, and say "relax" to yourself three times. Next, stretch your face: pull eyebrows up, chin down, ears back. Hold for about five seconds and say "relax" to yourself three times.

8. Stay in your relaxed position for a few more minutes. Feel the relaxation in your body. Your body will feel heavier, and you may feel a tingling throughout.
9. Stretch, and go on to the next exercise.

### **Body Parts Exercise**

1. Stay in the same position. You will go back over each body part, but instead of tensing and relaxing it, you will just relax it. As you think about each body part, you will say "relax" three times.

2. Relax all muscles from head to toes. Start with your toes.

Toes. Wiggle your toes and ankles. Let go of all tension in your feet. Let them hang limp and heavy. Think about your feet and say to yourself "relax, relax, relax."

Calves. Imagine your calves to be heavy and limp. Think about your calves and say to yourself "relax, relax, relax."

Thighs. Imagine your thighs to be so heavy that they are sinking into the floor. Think about your thighs and tell them to "relax, relax, relax."

Buttocks. Think about letting all the tension out of your buttocks. Tell them to "relax, relax, relax."

Stomach. Breathe slowly and evenly while you think about your stomach. Tell it to "relax, relax, relax."

Chest. Think about your chest. Breathe deeply. Tell it to "relax, relax, relax."

Shoulders. Wriggle your shoulders while you think about them. Tell them to "relax, relax, relax."

Arms. Wriggle your fingers and move your wrists. Think about the tension going out of your arms. Tell them to "relax, relax, relax."

Throat. Think about your throat feeling relaxed. Tell it to "relax, relax, relax."

Neck and Head. As you think about your neck and head, slowly move your head from side to side. Tell them to "relax, relax, relax."

Face. Think about your forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and chin. Let your lower jaw drop. Tell them to "relax, relax, relax."

3. Is there any tension anywhere in your body? Think about the tense part of your body and make it relax. Think about your entire body and tell it to "relax, relax, relax."
4. Stay relaxed for five minutes. Either think of pleasant things (your favorite place), or let your mind go blank.
5. After the five minutes, say to yourself: "I am deeply relaxed. I am ready to wake up refreshed and relaxed."
6. Arouse yourself slowly! Wiggle your toes, flex the ankles, wrists, and fingers. Bend the right arm, then the left; bend the right knee, then the left.
7. Stretch your arms over your head. Slowly sit up, stand, and stretch again.

### **Self-Suggestion**

The self-suggestion technique, also called autogenic training, combines self-suggestion and exercise to reach deep mental and physical relaxation. For self-suggestion to work, you have to:

- ◆ apply the procedure as presented
- ◆ stay in position for some time
- ◆ keep distractions out
- ◆ concentrate on bodily processes

The exercises produce feelings of heaviness and warmth, a slow and regular heart beat, and slow and regular breathing. Each complete set of exercises takes about 10 minutes. Taking more time will be helpful. Two separate, daily sessions, at any time of the day, are recommended until results begin to show. Results cannot be forced; they will come gradually. After the technique begins to work, a single daily session should be enough. As one sign that the technique is beginning to work, you will notice that your hands warm up; also, you will feel the level of tension going down in your body.

For each session, find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Either lie or sit comfortably. The exact words are not important. It is most important to concentrate on

the meaning of the words and feeling what is said. The phrases must be spoken very slowly. Speak each phrase three times, and allow three seconds between phrases.

1. Relaxation Phrases (3 minutes). Try to see and feel the relaxation in each part of your body as you say the phrase. Say them slowly to yourself, and repeat each one three times.

- ▼ "I feel quiet."
- ▼ "I am beginning to feel relaxed."
- ▼ "My feet feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "My ankles and my knees feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "My hips feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "My stomach and my chest feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "My hands and arms feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "My shoulders feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "My neck, jaw, and forehead feel heavy and relaxed."
- ▼ "Everything feels comfortable and smooth."
- ▼ "My whole body feels quiet, heavy, relaxed, and comfortable."

2. Warmth Phrases (2 minutes). Stay in the same position. Again, concentrate on what you are saying, and try to feel it. Repeat each phrase three times.

- ▼ "I am quiet and relaxed."
- ▼ "My feet and legs are heavy and warm."
- ▼ "My arms and hands are heavy and warm."
- ▼ "I feel quite quiet and relaxed."
- ▼ "My whole body is relaxed and warm."
- ▼ "My hands are relaxed and warm."
- ▼ "Warmth is flowing into my hands; they are warm, warm, warm. . ."

3. Imagery Phrases (3 minutes). Stay in the same position. Keep the eyes closed, concentrate, and feel each phrase as you say it. Repeat each phrase three times.

- ▼ "My whole body feels quiet, comfortable, and at ease."
- ▼ "My mind is quiet."
- ▼ "My thoughts are quiet and I am at ease."
- ▼ "I am shutting out the world, and I am at ease."
- ▼ "Deep in my mind I feel myself quiet and at ease."
- ▼ "I am alert, but in an easy, quiet, inward way."
- ▼ "My mind is calm and quiet."
- ▼ "I feel all quiet inside."

4. Activation Phrases (2 minutes). After practice, try to attain the same effect with your eyes open. End the session with a stretch. Take three deep breaths. Repeat each phrase three times.

- ▼ "I feel life and energy flowing through my feet and legs."
- ▼ "I feel life and energy flowing through my hips, stomach, and chest."
- ▼ "I feel life and energy flowing through my hands and arms."
- ▼ "I feel life and energy flowing through my shoulders, neck, head, and face."
- ▼ "The life and energy makes me feel light and alive."

## **Meditation**

Meditation must be practiced at least once daily, at any time of the day for about 20 minutes. To practice meditation you must:

- ◆ take a very comfortable position
- ◆ stay passive (do not make an effort, but let it happen)

- ◆ shut out all distracting thoughts and cares
- ◆ shift your attention inward and keep your mind from wandering outward (it helps to keep saying "Calmmm..." to yourself, and/or to stare at something fixed).

At first, find a quiet place without distractions. Later this will not matter. Recommended positions are sitting cross-legged, kneeling, or lying down.

1. Stay in the comfortable position.
2. If necessary, close your eyes to avoid distractions.
3. Deeply relax all your muscles. Begin at your feet and go up to your face. Stay relaxed.
4. Breathe through your nose. Breathe easily and notice your breathing, concentrate on your breathing. Keep taking deep breaths. Keep your thoughts turned inward.
5. After about 20 minutes, end the meditation. Stay in your position for another minute or two. Very slowly arouse yourself. After awhile, begin to stand up slowly.

## Inoculation

There are two phases in the inoculation technique.

**Phase 1. Education.** This phase is meant to provide you with a better understanding of your stress reactions. Recall stressful events or situations. Try to remember your exact reactions to them. For example, recall a time when you felt great fear. Most likely, your reactions included sweaty palms, dry mouth, fast heartbeat, fast breathing, "butterflies" in the stomach, or tense muscles.

**Phase 2. Rehearsal.** Work out positive, self coping methods. Tailor the methods when you face stress. For example, if you have poor night vision and have a fear of not being able to find your way in the dark, you would mentally rehearse ways in which you would go about finding your way in the

dark. These might include memorizing various paths in daylight, or noticing familiar objects that you could feel in the dark and which would serve as cues in determining a particular path.



## APPENDIX E

### Techniques for Coping with Stress in Others

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## TECHNIQUES FOR COPING WITH STRESS IN OTHERS

### Ventilation

Ventilation is "talking it out" or "getting it all out." Like all of the coping techniques, ventilation works best with practice. Getting used to the idea of telling your troubles to someone else makes it easier to do it. At the critical time--in combat--it should be easy to "let go." Listening patiently also requires practice. Very often the listener will want to say something in response to the thoughts and feelings of another soldier. However, the listener should refrain from speaking, other than to encourage the talker to go on talking. For example, if the talker says, "Jones is a no good...", the listener might say, "You're real mad. Why do you think..." Asking questions in the form of "How?", "When?", and "Who?" is particularly helpful to encourage another soldier to keep talking. The listener should learn from the talker, especially about how the talker copes.

The listener is most helpful if he stays calm--no matter what the talker says. It is important for the talker to get it all out and not to hold back. The talker should talk about how he or she feels and copes until he or she is tired of talking. If the person feels like it, it's ok to repeat the same things over and over again. He or she should be aware that many other soldiers may feel pretty much the same way.

### Stress Counseling

In stress counseling, any soldier, who recognizes that another soldier is under stress, tries to help the soldier under stress find a way of coping. Stress counseling is particularly useful when both soldiers face the same sources of stress. Effective stress counseling is accomplished by:

1. Determining the problem. Identify thoughts and feelings and the reasons behind them. Be aware that eye contact, body position, gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and other nonverbal behavior are expressions of inner thoughts and feelings.

2. Reflecting what the soldier thinks. In the early part of the counseling, it is best for the helping soldier to reflect the thoughts of the soldier being helped. The helping soldier does not offer suggestions but encourages the soldier under stress to speak freely. The helping soldier may repeat the same ideas expressed by the soldier being helped, but in a slightly different way, for example, "You feel...", "You think..." Or the helping soldier may provide summary statements such as "What you've said so far is..." or "You have told me that..."
3. Pointing out what works and what doesn't work. The helping soldier may present discrepancies or inconsistencies in the statement or actions of the soldier being helped. These should be presented in a way which will help the soldier to see the inconsistency and move forward to developing effective coping skills. The soldier being helped may be confronted with such statements as: "First you told me that...", "Did you consider..."
4. Offering suggestions. Toward the end of their talk, the helping soldier may present problems similar to those stated by the soldier being helped and suggest solutions that seem to work for other soldiers. For example, "James had the same problem and he..." "What do you think of the way he handled it?" "How about asking Smith..." The helping soldier helps the other soldier to change his responses to stress sources by evaluating the probable results of the suggestion. This will convince the soldier being helped of the merit of the suggestions.
5. Closing. End the talk by getting the soldier under stress to summarize what went on throughout the talk and to make decisions about what he or she will do and when and how to do it.

## **Crisis Management**

The "crisis management" technique is applicable to a wide variety of situations. Some suggestions for crisis management are contained in the table on page 55. The steps in crisis management are:

1. Observe the soldier in crisis carefully and try to deal with any threats to his or her safety or that of others.
2. If he or she is acting out, calm the stressed soldier. Be flexible in the approach used to calm the soldier in crisis. Different procedures can be used to help the soldier in crisis. The procedure you select is a matter of personal judgment. The important thing is the end result--getting the soldier calm, not any specific procedure. Some procedures which can be used are:

- ▼ Assume role of neutral but determined authority: Avoid being too harsh or too soft. Telling a soldier what to do or giving orders at the initial stages of crisis intervention may fail if you have not succeeded in obtaining the soldier's attention to a sufficient degree, or if you have not made him or her feel sufficiently secure and reassured.
- ▼ Show understanding: Demonstrate an understanding of the soldier's crisis by your words, tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. Make it clear that you understand what he or she is feeling and appreciate how strongly it is being felt. Try to convince the soldier of your sincerity. You might make such statements as, "You really are feeling upset.. .," "It can be awfully frightening when this happens," or "I can understand how you feel because he was killed." Statements such as these indicate that you understand the soldier's feelings.
- ▼ Present a calm model: Be calm. Your calmness serves as a model. Your calm behavior is what you want the soldier to imitate. Show the soldier that you are responding calmly to the situation. This

is accomplished through your words, tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. Communicate that you appreciate his or her reaction to the sources of stress.

- ▼ Be reassuring: Provide reassurance through statements such as, "It will be O.K.," "This feeling is quite common," or "We've got everything under control, don't worry."
- ▼ Encourage ventilation: Getting the soldier to talk will be an effective means of calming. Assume the role of an active listener. Encourage talking about the crisis itself. Ask numerous questions. Try to get the soldier to talk about something else, if he or she refuses to talk about the crisis. In this way, you will divert the soldier's attention from the crisis, until he or she can talk about it. Then get back to the crisis situation as soon as you can. Use of distractions is also effective in diverting the soldier's attention from the crisis, for example, ask for a favor, such as "Do you have a cigarette?"
- ▼ Repeat and outshout (if necessary): Sometimes soldiers may be so stressed that they are unresponsive and uncommunicative. In such cases, you may have to repeat directions or questions several times. At other times, the soldier may be so loud that you may have to shout loudly in order to be heard. A display of authority may, itself, produce a quieting effect.
- ▼ Use physical restraint (if necessary): If a soldier is acting out and talking, repetition, or outshouting have no effect, you may have to physically subdue and restrain the soldier in order to calm him. However, do not use more force than necessary.
- ▼ Use trusted buddies: If your approaches are not successful in calming a soldier in crisis, ask a friend

to assist. In general, buddies or someone in authority, known to the soldier in crisis, are the best crisis managers.

3. Collect relevant information. After the soldier is calm and feels relatively secure, tell him or her exactly what you want to discuss and why. Once the stage is set, you can begin talking about the crisis. Listen carefully to everything said. Restate the content of the soldier's comments so that you show him or her that you understand what is being felt and said.
4. Take appropriate action. At this point in the crisis intervention, formulate a plan of action and tell the soldier of this plan. You might, for example, decide to rest the soldier, recommend relaxation efforts, relieve him or her temporarily, or tell him or her to return to duty. The decision will be based on the soldier's behavior and the crisis situation. In addition, you might decide to employ the use of other coping techniques. Ensure that the soldier understands the plan of action.

#### **Peer Feedback**

The peer feedback technique involves the use of a group of two or more peers. The peers should be individuals that are known and respected by the soldier. Typically, a soldier needing help in coping with stress presents his or her situation to the group of peers. The group's function is to listen, question, and evaluate the soldier's problem and the methods used in trying to cope. It is never appropriate for the group to pass judgment. After obtaining the information from the soldier, the group resorts to a private discussion (away from the soldier) in which the coping techniques used by the soldier are discussed. When the group again meets with the soldier, feedback is provided to the soldier through the group's spokesman. The feedback will consist of coping techniques that the soldier should consider using. It should be determined that the soldier fully understands the suggestions made by the group. Before closing the session, the spokesman should request a response from the soldier as to which technique(s) he or she will try and when.